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EDITORIAL

Korea: the battle can never be ended by guns

A YEAR OF WAR in Korea, more than six months of it against the inexhaustible armies of Communist China, has settled nothing.

Deadlock is both military and diplomatic. The manpower of the East is pitted against the machine-power of the West, and their weights in battle prove to be roughly equal—at any rate in the peculiar circumstances of this conflict.

No one any longer fears that the Communist hordes will be able to fling the United Nations forces off the peninsula. What they failed to do in last autumn's battle of the Pusan perimeter and last winter's first great Communist offensive they are unlikely to do in the future.

But, equally, no one expects that however long the war drags on the Allies will be able to batter the Chinese into abandoning their aggression.

In a defensive war on or near the 38th Parallel we can punish the enemy, but never injure him fatally. In a new push to the Korean border we could pay a fearful price for a few hundred miles of Korean territory—and still bring the end no nearer. In a full-scale war against China across the Yalu River we could commit ourselves to many useless years of slaughter and impoverishment.

THOSE are the three *military* alternatives. Obviously none of them is acceptable to the Western nations.

We have therefore to face the fact that the Korean tragedy can never be ended by guns: that it must be ended by negotiation.

A major obstacle to peace on the Western side has already been removed by the dismissal of General MacArthur. He stood for open and total war with Communist China, on her mainland as well as in Korea. He wanted to support Chiang Kai-shek against Mao Tse-tung and so to fight, if necessary, for Formosa.

But it is unfair to denounce MacArthur as a dangerous warmonger without first looking at Korea from his point of view as a professional soldier. As commander-in-chief, his job was to win the war. So he, too, must have long ago listed the three alternatives—and have dismissed the first two as hopeless. Therefore he plumped for the third. In that he was terribly wrong, and he has paid for his mistake by being stripped of power.

But General Ridgeway has inherited the same situation. He also

cannot be expected to "win" the war. He also is fighting an aimless battle without clear instructions, and in political shackles which make any military victory impossible.

Each week more blood and treasure are poured out by the United Nations on the barren hillsides of Korea. Each week the plight of the miserable Koreans themselves becomes more appalling. And each week seems to increase the uncertainty as to what we hope to achieve and how we hope to achieve it. The fate of the United Nations Organization itself is at stake.

U.N.O. proved last summer that it could start a war—a just war against aggression. It has yet to prove that it can end or win a war, or even conduct it along logical lines with clear directives to its commanders.

The situation was always complicated by the disproportionately large contribution made by the United States. It has been further bedevilled by the MacArthur storms and by the problem of Formosa.

EVEN the two Great Powers, America and Britain, which dominate the anti-Communist effort do not agree fully on their policy towards China or on the place of Korea in the world situation.

In all this vast, vague tangle of conflicting interests and councils, the gallantry of the fighting men alone shines out clear and true.

But we shall be asking too much of our soldiers if the politicians and the diplomats cannot rapidly make progress in their own field. Wrangling at Lake Success is not good enough while British, Americans, Koreans and men of half a dozen other nationalities are dying daily.

Let us admit the baffling difficulty of negotiating with an enemy who observes none of the traditional rules between nations, whose motives and methods are obscure, and whose only known contacts are with the mysterious stonewallers of the Kremlin.

But how little chance of success do we allow ourselves while Western councils are divided and our own policies remain uncertain?

The adoption by the Western Powers of a firm, unanimous policy on all the Far Eastern issues is the only possible basis for terms to China.

If this cannot be done through the machinery of the United Nations, it must—though with reluctance—be done outside it. There can be no task of greater urgency.

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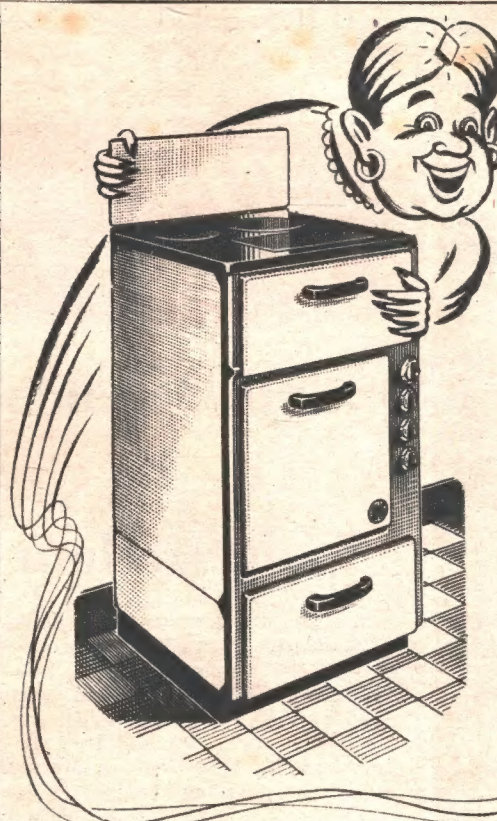
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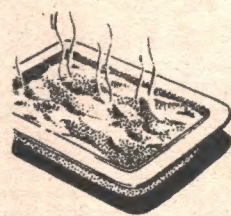
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Civil Defence in the front parlour

ASKED TO ENROL civil defence recruits, I collected a group of fifteen women willing to attend lectures. As we all had young children (I have four), afternoon lectures were impossible, so I arranged to hold them in my front room every Friday evening.

Everyone enjoyed these evenings, due no doubt to the friendly atmosphere, and we have all gained our badges. Our instructor said we were the brightest crowd he had. More important, in our view, is our ability to protect our families through the knowledge we have gained.

I don't think our experience need be unique, because this is something that could be started elsewhere. After all, it is common sense that a good C.D. corps is the best insurance against war. —MRS. MARGUERITE COLLIER, 42 Wallcote Avenue, London, N.W.2.

Good Dog ...



DIAMOND, our dog, and his playmate, the kitten, are another example of a cat-and-dog friendship ("Free Speech", April 28). Diamond was nearly two years old when I introduced the kitten to him. Now they even share their meals. As my photograph shows, he is quite resigned to the silly tricks of kittenhood. —MRS. JOYCE MORRIS, The School House, Kingsley, Bordon, Hants.

... Bad Dog

THREE WEEKS AGO, I lost a young lamb, and some days later heard that a dog had been seen carrying a lamb in its mouth towards Clitheroe. Publicity is what is wanted, so thank you for your editorial, "The Problem Of Three Million Over-privileged Dogs." —H. ALLEN, Limehouse Farm, Clitheroe.

... In the Welsh mining valleys, we have a much greater problem from over-privileged sheep, which roam the towns and villages freely at the expense of gardeners and allotment-holders. —SUFFERER, Tredegar, Mon.

... What about over-privileged farmers? Those who, in the bitterest weather, leave unprotected sheep and lambs to die on the fells and moors, and then, when the pitiful skeletons are turned up, blame dogs? And what about over-privileged motorists? Those who run over dogs and do not stop, leaving the animals to die or drag themselves home? —DOROTHY WHATFORD NEESHAM, Morningside Cottage, Cart Lane, Grange-over-Sands, Lancs.

The Rude Hosts

WE MIGHT AT LEAST treat foreigners courteously when they respond to our invitation to come here and spend money during the Festival season. I was disgusted to hear two women on a bus roaring with laughter at two

Italians who boarded the bus at Hyde Park Corner. "Here are the visitors," one of the women said loudly. "This is what we've been saving our meat for. You wouldn't know you were in England these days." A couple behind me made a quiet comment in Norwegian. —M. R. SEATON, 5 Lyndhurst Road, London, N.W.3.

Worst Of All Messages

NEWS OF THE DEATH of her husband in hospital has just been sent to a friend of mine—by telegram. Naturally, this was a terrible shock to her. Surely a more humane way than a tersely worded telegram could be found for carrying such sad and unexpected news. —N. DOWLING, 62 St. Alban's Road, Westbury Park, Bristol.

The Playmates

WOULDN'T it be a good thing for world peace if children grew up to disregard the colour of the skin? Here is a photograph of my little girl, aged



three, with a playmate in a park in Alexandria when we were staying there. They played together quite happily. If parents co-operated, the colour bar could become a thing of the past. —MRS. A. KEMP, 11 Carey Street, Leeds.

Road Sense For Children

A PARENT COMPLAINED in "Free A Speech" that his child had attended school for six years without being given any road instruction. In Burnley (we have just moved from there), the police organize a road safety campaign for the children in one of the parks during the summer holidays. A section of the park is turned into a replica of a road, complete with signs and pedestrian crossings. The police provide tricycles and cycles for the children to use on the "road." Competitions are held and prizes awarded to the children showing the best road sense. —MRS. J. H. MASHITER, 20 Daisy Bank, Gee Cross, Hyde, Cheshire.

... Lights were green for me to cross the road. I did my kerb drill and nothing was coming. When I was in the middle of the road a car came very fast round the corner and nearly knocked me down. It's no use doing kerb drill if cars come very fast round corners. If they do that, I shan't live to be eight. —JOAN GAUNT (aged seven), 79 Jackson Lane, Morley, Leeds.

Their Festival Preview

RONALD LAMPITT'S COVER PAINTING of the South Bank Exhibition site and the article in the same issue of JOHN

BULL (April 28) on the deep shelter hostel at Clapham South are of real value to my pupils. A school party, forty-two strong, ranging in age from ten to twelve and a half years, is to make the long journey from our Scottish moorland village to London for the Festival. Lampitt's cover gives the children a preview of the exhibition, and Ian Bevan's article on the hostel gives them—and their parents—an insight into their sleeping quarters during their visit. —HEADMASTER, Ayrshire.

In the form of a fascinating puzzle, Ronald Lampitt's cover painting has been chosen as one of the official Festival of Britain souvenirs. The cover is reproduced in full colour and mounted on plywood as a 154-piece jigsaw puzzle. On the back of this is a novel crossword. The puzzle is obtainable from newsagents, booksellers and stationers.

When Tea Tastes Different

SINCE MOVING TO THIS DISTRICT in the West of Scotland we have scarcely had a good cup of tea. Yet, when we visit friends in a village five miles away, my husband and I enjoy our cups of tea almost as much as we did in our former home in Edinburgh. The trouble is the local water, and our experience bears out the remark in the recent JOHN BULL article on tea-tasting — that the quality of the water affects the taste of the tea. The water here is extremely soft—excellent for clothes washing, but rotten for tea-making. —MRS. H. CAMERON, Ardnahane, Cove, Helensburgh, Dumbartonshire.

Marshallissimo

I AM AMAZED THAT the story, "The Magic Hoop," was considered worthy of publication in JOHN BULL. The illustration [reproduced below] dispels any doubts one might entertain as to who "The Marshallissimo" is supposed to



be. If Mr. Stalin must be made fun of, let's have it in better form than as a woman-chaser. —W. WILLIAMS, 32 Coed Marion Road, Carnarvon, North Wales.

... "The Magic Hoop" would be hard to beat for wit and charm. Resemblance of The Marshallissimo to a certain well-known character adds piquancy to the tale. —MRS. M. GRAINGER, 5 Harwell Close, Beechwood Estate, Middlesbrough.

John Bull welcomes readers' views, experiences and ideas for publication. A guinea is paid for every letter used. Mark the envelope "Free Speech" and make sure your full name and address are in the letter.

THIS WEEK'S COVER

ALTHOUGH perhaps better known as a landscape painter, it was as a marine artist that Rowland Hilder, R.I., began his career, and when young he spent his time sailing the coast in tramp steamers, barges, trawlers. Today his chief hobby still lies in small boat sailing. Married, with two children, he lives at Blackheath, London, not far away from Tower Bridge, the subject of his cover painting.

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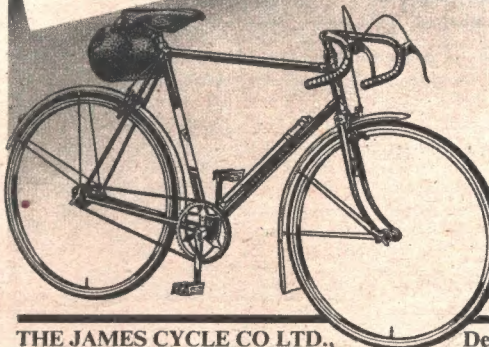
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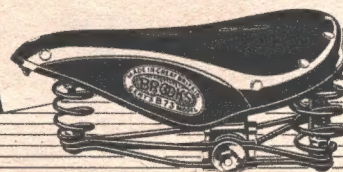
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FORLORN, unhappy Mr. Bane
Was prone to meal-time stomach pain,
To flatulence and indigestion,
Until he asked a simple question.



SAID next-door-neighbour Mr. Kane,
Take my advice—so Mr. Bane
Now sucks two Rennies after meals.
How happy now his stomach feels!

Suck two Rennies slowly, like sweets . . . to restore acid balance



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DIGESTIF

RENNIES

for happy stomachs



I used to curse that man

There goes the Refuge agent—good luck to him! I used to curse him though—told me how to grow roses and talked life assurance at the same time. I wasn't a good listener until that awful business down the road. . . . The widow was just about destitute. Made me think—I realised what it would cost for Mary to keep up this house and give the kids a good start. After that—I met the Refuge chap at the gate!



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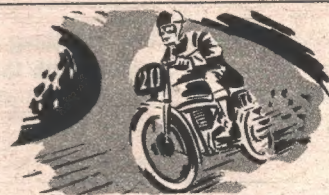
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STRANGLEHOLD

by **GEORGE BEARDMORE**

ILLUSTRATED BY K. J. PETTS

She was an ordinary girl in love. That was the tragedy of it

WORLD PROJECT STORY

There was nothing else she could do. The door burst open and she found herself facing Rozzi

THIS STORY WAS TOLD to me by a retired Metropolitan sergeant of police from B Division called Jenkinson. Our allotments adjoined and, when a shower of rain came up, we used to take shelter in his home-made cabin. Some people found him severe and over-critical, but I never had anything against him, unless it was his tobacco.

Any special idiocy in the young (he said to me one day) we put down to love, and leave it at that. It's no more than a label. I sometimes wonder if we don't forget the stranglehold of the thing itself.

Maybe I'd forgotten it in the case of my own little girl, Maisie. The way time passes!

It seemed that in the morning I'd left her skipping her way to school, and come back in the evening to find her running off to get married. It was a shock. I suddenly saw her as other men saw her, a fine, charming creature just blooming into womanhood. I'd kept her at grammar school till she was sixteen and then put her

in a solicitor's office, supposing that some day a nice young man would make a home for her in the suburbs somewhere.

Instead, she fell head over heels in love with a young man we knew in the office as Boxer. He was one of the Brook Street Boys, of whom a Cyprian called Rozzi was chief. None of them was over twenty-five. Their lay wasn't trifles like bag-snatching, but long-term robbery. Any raid of particular daring on a bonded warehouse or luxury flat might have been the Brook Street Boys. Sometimes they'd plan three months ahead. On the job, they were ruthless to the point of murder.

That was the kind of lad my little innocent fell for. It was love, the real thing. They had met at a dance hall. He had a lean, handsome face, spoke quietly, and wore loose American clothes. Maisie knew his reputation. He'd promised to settle down, she said, if she married him.

Personally, I was sure that with his training in the swift, casual returns of crime, he'd never be any good. He was infatuated enough to marry her, but





Boxer half-rose from the bed in a panic, his hand clutching his wound, his eyes desperate

marriage, too, was something casual with him, easily entered into and easily dropped. Nothing I prophesied made a bit of difference, except to add to her loyalty. One sultry Saturday morning in July last she shut the street door behind her and, with a suitcase in her hand, went off to get married. Nothing more dramatic than that.

Then minutes later, she was picked up by an open sports car and whisked off to the Marylebone Registrar's. The witnesses were a clerk and the bridegroom whose turn it was next. After her husband had kissed her, the first thing he did was buy a paper and rustle through the pages, then rustle through them again because he didn't find what he expected.

They were to have gone at once by road to Bournemouth, but now, without explaining why, he parked the car in a garage off the Strand and took her to lunch at Simpson's. Afterwards, they went to a cinema, bought tea at a dead-and-alive café nearby, and went to another cinema. With each breath of fresh air, he got a paper and pitched it away.

Dusk had fallen when he at last made up his mind to be off, and the headlines had changed. A robbery had taken place at a wholesale jeweller's in the City. The thieves had climbed a stack-pipe to a roof in Laurence Pountney Lane and had then made a circuit of leads and chimney stacks before prising open a ventilation grid and penetrating to the strongroom. Watches and bracelets of gold and platinum had been taken to a value of £90,000. The thieves had been on the point of leaving when a watchman had surprised them. His only weapon had been a clasp-knife, which was found covered with blood behind some packing cases. He had barely escaped with his life, and was now in Bart's with a detective by his bed. The raid bore all the trademarks of the Brook Street Boys.

Maisie asked no questions. Her husband had never moved a finger's distance from her side. As they nosed their way up Victoria Street and into King's Road, Chelsea, she felt that a long

night drive to begin her honeymoon was in every way romantic.

Storm clouds had been building up behind the heat, and suddenly the sky fell in torrents of warm rain. In a scurry, they hopped out and put the hood up. Now he was anxious to be out of London as quickly as possible, and the delay irritated him. She wrapped a coat round her shoulders, but he could not be bothered and simply put a cap on.

They were travelling at well over the regulation thirty when a car with blazing headlights swerved across the road towards them.

Boxer was necessarily a man of quick decision. He drove the car in a broad skid round the corner of a narrow side street and came to a standstill by the offside kerb twenty yards from the main road. He half-leaned out to look behind him. Maisie glanced round as footsteps pattered on the pavement. In the light reflected from the wet road, she caught a glimpse of a thin, dark face and sharp eyes. An arm was raised. Her husband gave a sharp gasp, then slumped, groaning, over the wheel. The footsteps went pattering back, an engine roared, and the headlights of a car flashed across the driving mirror. The Brook Street Boys, it seemed, had disliked the elopement even more than her parents.

Maisie put an arm round her husband and cried: "Boxer, what's happened, what have they done to you?"

He clutched his left breast and looked at her. "Knifed. Here. It was Rozzi."

Our grammar-school girl had not gone through the war without some knowledge of first aid. She said: "Can you breathe without it hurting? Try breathing deeply." He breathed while she watched his mouth for tell-tale streaks. "Lungs untouched. I must get a doctor. Give me the wheel. We'll go to a hospital."

"No. No doctors. Doctors mean police. There's only you."

It was a last effort. He slumped over the wheel again and would not be roused. It was Maisie's blackest moment. He might be dying. Somewhere, blood was seeping out of his body.

She flung open the door and stepped on to the road. Not a soul was in sight. The car had drawn up by a flight of steps leading to a glazed door through which a dim light showed, picking out the words: "Hotel Brooklyn."

Hotel! A cheap, shoddy, inconspicuous hotel! She could not have asked for anything better. All doubt left her. The future, the prospect of death, police, Rozzi—all thought of them fell from her. She knew nothing of life outside a grammar school and the files of a solicitor's office, but she was, as we say, "in love." She leaned over Boxer, who blinked his eyes. "I'm taking you in here, just as far as a bedroom. Lean on me."

IT was a critical trial. He stirred, and succeeded in putting his feet on the pavement before raising himself on her arm. His left hand clutched his breast even more desperately. A dark stain was spreading beneath his fingers. If he had been wearing an overcoat, the knife would not have penetrated so deeply. She wrapped her own topcoat round his shoulders, then stooped inside the car for the ignition key.

They climbed the steps one by one and shuffled towards the door. It opened with difficulty, admitting them to a small, stuffy foyer in which, beside the desk, stood a stunted palm tree. A small man with a bald head appeared, Maisie's first challenge in the fight before her.

"My husband has had a heart attack," she declared. "I know exactly what to do if only I can get him to bed. Can you help me? We were on our way to Bournemouth. So distressing!"

She smiled engagingly. The man hesitated. "Like everyone, we're rather full just now—"

"But you will help us, won't you?" With her free hand, she produced a banknote for £5. The man took the note with reluctance. His eyes were shift. But then no hotelier likes a death

on his hands. "A small room on the second, madam. It's all I have."

She handed him the ignition key. "So kind of you. Our car's outside. Can I ask you to get someone to garage it? And our suitcases are in it, two of them."

The man pressed a bell and a slatternly girl appeared, whether waitress or chambermaid was open to question. A tiny lift was hidden by the palm tree. It was an assurance to Maisie that providence was on her side, for Boxer could not possibly have climbed two flights of stairs. In the lift, Maisie heard him breathing shallowly, and fear smote her afresh. If he were to die, then and there! She was now irretrievably committed to the adventure. But he did not die. They reached their bare little room in safety and the girl held the door open for them, watching Boxer curiously as he crept painfully past her, husbanding his last grains of strength.

Even then, Maisie had the presence of mind to say with apparent casualness: "He'll be perfectly all right tomorrow. Do you think we might have a potful of strong tea?" And she slipped two half-crowns into the girl's hand.

When the door was shut and bolted, she ran to Boxer's assistance. He had tottered to the bed rail and stood in a stupor, muttering: "My God! My God!" She helped him on to the bed and drew her topcoat over him before piling on blankets and eiderdown. The room was close-shut and the air stifling. She drew down a window, then rattled the heavy chenille curtains across to shut out the watching night. Quickly she surveyed her field of battle, and inside a large, built-in cupboard found a small sink, a bowl, a stone hot-water bottle and a tiny kettle.

SHE knew exactly what she must do; she filled the kettle and set it on the gas ring, brought out the bowl and looked round for material for dressings. She would not take the sheet because it was soiled, but robbed the mattress of its starched case. Almost immediately, the kettle of water boiled. She had to replenish it three times in all, because it was so small.

Then, at last, she dared to investigate the boy's wound. He remained indifferent to everything she did, a deep frown on his forehead, his cheeks a dirty grey against the pillow. She slit his jacket open with a penknife and removed the hand clutching the bloodstained shirt. The movement made him open his eyes, and phrase by phrase he stammered out an urgent message.

"The raid was planned for twelve. My job was to—silence that caretaker. I thought—make the marriage my alibi. But they put the raid off three hours. The alibi's washed up. Now Rozzi's tailed me." Fear flashed across his eyes: "He'll never leave me alive. I know too much. He'll get me!"

The eyes and mouth shut. The information did not help her. It told her only that, in addition to nursing him back to health, in secret, without the help of surgeon or police, she must also outwit the Brook Street Boys. Even this prospect did not appal her. She was too busy.

No doubt the assailant had meant to kill. Only the instinctive jerk of Boxer's arm had thrown a fatal stab to the heart three inches high. The blood from the wound was already thin with serum. No artery could have been cut. She needed antiseptics, but none was available.

She was well into the messy business of slitting away the clotted shirt and swabbing the wound when a knock came at the door. The girl with the tea wanted to bring it inside. Her nostrils twitched, perhaps at the scent of blood, when Maisie took the tray from her.

Boxer was cleaned, bandaged and in a coma of mingled pain and shock when a second knock came at the door. The manager himself stood outside, extending the ignition key and offering to bring inside the two suitcases. She pretended that the patient was asleep and whispered her thanks. The manager whispered back: "You're

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Typical Partisan *Odred* such as Davidson was to join. About a hundred strong, poorly fed and armed, they were the backbone of Tito's early army

Parachuting into Yugoslavia, Basil Davidson met Tito in a mountain hideout. His work at Tito's HQ complete, he now joins the Partisans in the thick of the fight against the Nazi invaders.

I WAS A SOLDIER-SPY (4) *Continuing the real-life adventures of a British special agent*

I march with Tito's ragged rebels

by **BASIL DAVIDSON, M.C.**



Davidson with General Kosta (right) who led the Partisans under fire across the Bosna

"**W**E SHALL HAVE TO MOVE very fast and very quietly," General Kosta explained, as we set off to cross the River Bosna. We moved by night, in a long, silent column, one behind the other. Among the thousand men and women under Kosta's command were many civilians and many Partisans who were as yet inadequately armed. This crossing of the Bosna was to be the first time that I saw the Partisans in action. It proved altogether a tricky business.

It was tricky because the enemy in Yugoslavia was like a spider sitting in the middle of its web. If you stumbled on the web and the spider reached you before you disentangled yourself, then the spider would almost certainly kill you. If you eluded the spider, then the minor dangers of the web itself could be ignored.

The spider's web consisted of the roads and railways and rivers. Along all of these the spider had its watch-posts, ready to tell it what was happening and to trip you up and hold you until the spider could arrive. Between the meshes of this web were the woods and mountains, and in these it was you, and not the spider, who had the upper hand. If the spider ventured off the roads and railways you could steal up to it during

the night and wound it badly. The whole art and strategy of Partisan war in Yugoslavia therefore lay in not letting the spider know where you were, where you were going, or what you meant to do. So long as the spider could be kept guessing, you could smash its web more or less wherever you liked—raiding suddenly upon bridges and isolated outposts and garrisons, and thus widening your area of safety and manoeuvre (what the Partisans called "liberated territory").

In this way you could bleed the German spider and weaken him, making him draw constantly on new strength in the form of reinforcements from Germany and from the other fighting fronts; you could bewilder him and worry him, and worry also the top spiders in Berlin. You could play your part, not only in freeing Yugoslavia of the German spider, but also in the general war against the Germans and their allies.

But there were times when you wanted to move across the web for purposes other than direct attack—when you wanted to transfer your forces to another segment of the woods and mountains in order to prepare for fresh battles in a new region. On these occasions you tried to avoid disturbing the spider, because you were not ready, at that moment, to fight. Crossing the

Bosna was one of these occasions. The idea was to bring new forces into the mountains beyond the Bosna, and then to attack the spider in places where he thought that he was safe.

That was the first part of the trickiness. The second part was that the woods and valleys on both sides of the Bosna were known to be filled with enemy spies, with peasants who were in the service of the Germans. Once these were alerted of our approach, they in turn would alert the watch-posts on the river, and the watch-posts would send telephone calls to the nearest big garrisons, calling for help. Unless we had crossed the river before these garrisons got on the move, we should be caught with our pants down.

The third part of the trickiness was that the Germans had an armoured train on the railway which runs beside the Bosna. At the best of times an armoured train is not a nice thing to meet. It has quick-firing guns protected by thick armour, and it moves with what seems uncanny speed. It is a sort of sub-spider. Speed and

silence, then, were necessary. But our precautions were in vain. The enemy's spies detected us. We knew this because some of our men fired at a group of Chetniks (armed peasants) who were running for the river. The Chetniks got away. Then it at once became a race with the armoured train.

The moon in its last feeble quarter gave us a pitch-dark night. The woods on either side were a wilderness of shadows and strange noises. We marched for the river at a brisk pace, at times a trot, stumbling over roots and stones, the branches of trees flicking and stinging at our faces, catching in our clothes, jerking at our guns and equipment. There was no more firing in the woods, and it looked as if we were going to win our race.

Over the crest of one last hill we went, and down into the valley of the Bosna where the river, a pale wide strip of water, loomed gleaming in the darkness. Then, abruptly, there was a whispered shout and the man in front of me came so abruptly to a stop that I crashed into him and staggered with him into the mud.

The whole column halted—and round the bend of the hill, clanking and rattling, and throwing up clouds of sparks and fiery smoke from the engine, there clattered the armoured train. I was so close that I could see that the armoured unit with the engine was in the middle of the train, with two coaches forward and two aft so as to take the brunt of any mines we might have laid. It rattled easily over a culvert just ahead of me; the head of our column was already under this culvert.

Partisans Versus Armoured Train

Then everything went up with a bang. Not to cross the river was to accept defeat. Kosta was going to cross the river whatever happened. A great deal happened, and so quickly that we scarcely knew what. There erupted a mighty explosion just to my left. Partisan sappers had blown the track just beyond the culvert, and a few moments before the train arrived. They had miscalculated, of course; they should have blown it *after* the train had passed, so as to prevent the train from coming back and shooting us up while we were crossing the river.

In reverse, the train comes steaming back towards us. We begin to run. We're through the culvert and legging it for the river bank, a hundred yards away. Now the line is going up in all directions; thud after thud of our high-explosive charges tear great chunks of rail out of their setting and send them rocketing skywards. The line won't be usable for weeks.

But the train is still on the active list. By now it's cut off both ways, and hasn't more than half a mile of line to run on. But it knows that somewhere in this half mile we are crossing the river. It opens up with all it has. Our rearguard sits down quietly on the river bank and returns the fire. There is little good in this except that it will distract the gunners in the armoured train. The air is loud with the mosquito-whine of small-arms fire.

Crossing The River Under Fire

Mortars. The gunners in the train seem to have spotted the tail of our column. But the train is having trouble of its own. Partisans have crept up within the shelter of the railway embankment and are lobbing grenades into it. Tomorrow these men will destroy the train altogether.

The mortars are uncomfortably close, crumping muddily into the river bank behind us, and there is a great deal of small-arms stuff whizzing past our heads; but the boys in the train don't really know just where we are, not yet, and already the head of our column is wading into the swift waters of the river.

By the time I get to the bank the first part of the column has crossed half the river and is crunching over a shingle spit that divides the stream. As they go they twitter like a crowd of migrant swallows, for most of them are civilians



Partisans would creep up and lay their mines



Pictures from Davidson's album. Ox and horse drawn carts were typical Partisan transport



Partisans roast pig over a spit. Davidson shared in this meal on Christmas Day, 1943

and many are women, and they're a great deal more worried even than I am. The splinter of the waning moon shines bleakly as we wade into the water, and away behind us the armoured train is spouting mortar bombs and bullets as if the last trump had sounded.

As they come to the edge of the water our few horses neigh and lower their heads, and their riders chirrup nervously at them, and they go sliding warily into the stream and send silver waves churning. The water is not very deep, but some of us are not very tall; and I can remember as clearly as if it were last night that there is a little cook three paces ahead of me who goes in right up to her neck, she is so small, and has to hang on madly to the man in front of her to stop herself from being swept away with the current.

From the shingle spit in the middle of the river there is an unforgettable scene in black and silver. The pebbles are pale with moonlight, pale beside the dark river; the men and women as they cross in single file, slowly, painfully, without haste, splash drops of phosphorous into the river's smooth ebony until the black line of them sparkles with silver light. The few who have horses ride them boldly into the river and cross in a shower of silver sparks. Back beyond the river the mortar bombs are still erupting.

That crossing was a near thing. A little bad luck and we should have paid for it dearly. As it was, we came across almost unscathed. Five hundred yards to the other side of the river, to the east where we were heading, I came upon Kosta. "Any casualties?" I asked.

He bent in his saddle and peered down at me. "Ah, there you are. Almost everyone's across. One man badly wounded, one lightly." He turned his horse, a trim cavalry mount taken from the enemy, and rode away down the column. We



ILLUSTRATION BY OLIPHANT

The train would rattle nearer—then, suddenly, the night would be scarred with blazing splinters

went marching up into the hills, shadows in the darkness.

In one of our halts that night I came upon the little cook who had narrowly escaped drowning in the river. She was discussing matters with a group of Partisans who had come to meet us from the east. She was so excited and proud of herself that she was hopping from one foot to the other, and talking all the time.

Nadia Shows Off Her Knowledge

"It only goes to show," Nadia was giving forth, "that you have to be good about security"—*konspiratsia* she called it, a famous Partisan word. "The Germans sent the train out because some of our men bumped into spies as we were coming up to that blooming river. And the spies told the garrison at Derventa, and Derventa telephoned for the train."

"Tell me," interrupted one of the Partisans from the group which had come to meet us, "is it right that you've got some Englishmen with you?"

"It is," Nadia admitted, not to be drawn. She added that the Englishmen were also subject to *konspiratsia*, to security.

"What, prisoners?" another asked. "When did they escape?" This was too much for Nadia. "Of course they're not prisoners. They've come from Africa, wherever that is. They jumped out of aeroplanes with parachutes. We're going to get a lot of stuff that way."

"With parachutes? What, you mean when they didn't have to jump? The aeroplanes didn't crash?"

"No, they didn't crash. They went back to Africa." And Nadia collapsed by the side of the road and laughed her head off. The astonishing fact of Englishmen arriving in parachutes added to the general hilarity. "Perhaps they'll send

me some boots. Nadia, do you think they will?"

They turned to me, wanting to pull my leg, shouting: "Ask for some boots, won't you?" and turned up their boots, with the uppers gaping from the soles like the mouths of dead fish. But Nadia took command again. "You people are politically uneducated," she rated them. "You can't go shouting for boots like that. What will they think of us? We've got to have guns first. Everything's fixed between the English and Tito. There's no need for you to go poking your noses into it."

The others were offended, and went off grumbling. But Nadia, like the whole Partisan movement, was irrepressible. "Mind you don't talk about it," she screamed after them.

Loose Conduct Was Punished

In the months that followed I was to find that young Nadia provided a pretty fair sample of that sentiment of equality and liberty which the Partisan movement bestowed upon the women who served in it. Their morals were impeccable, puritanical: loose conduct between men and women was punished with a severity that ranged, according to the offence, from a confiscation of their weapons (a shameful degradation in the eyes of the whole army) to a sentence of death. And in all my sixteen months with the Partisans, across hundreds of miles of Yugoslavia, I saw only one Partisan the worse for drink. To have behaved in any other way would have proved fatal to them, for they could never afford to relax their watchfulness for a moment.

We marched into eastern Bosnia, high into the hills, and made famous progress. We had disturbed the spider's web, but the spider had missed us; and now it was our turn to make the spider jump. Partisan columns rose as if out of the ground and battered at unsuspecting

garrisons, blew up railway bridges, destroyed motor transport, wiped out watch-posts. We marched and fought only at night, for then the enemy's aircraft could not know of our movements: by day we lay among the plum and apple orchards of eastern Bosnia and rested, and tried to forget that we were hungry.

Sitting in Sarajevo, the capital of this part of Bosnia and a town too big for us to assault, the spider saw great holes torn in its web. Enemy reinforcements came pouring in, but they were always a day or so behind our movements. They could not know exactly where Kosta and the Partisans would strike next, and they pounded heavily about the countryside, trying to anticipate our attacks.

I Get Fresh Orders

And just at this moment, in the midst of all this triumph, my wireless receiver delivered me new orders from Cairo. Headquarters was satisfied by my reports that the Partisan movement in eastern Bosnia was worth supporting, and they would now send in another officer from Cairo to act as permanent liaison. My orders were to push on and see more of the Partisan movement. I was to proceed with my third task also: to reach the Danube and to try to make contact with any movement of resistance that might be stirring in Hungary. This would mean a long and hazardous march northward across the wide plains beside the Danube. There, it was said, where the plains join Yugoslavia with Hungary, there was a thriving Partisan movement. Yet it seemed so improbable that Partisans could survive without the shelter of the woods and hills, that headquarters wanted to have eye-witness reports. What were the facts? *Go and find out.*

"You won't be able to live openly in that country," said Vlado Popovich, the political commissar of Kosta's Partisan corps (and later to be Yugoslav Ambassador in Moscow). "There's nothing more than a pocketful of woods, and the hills aren't hills at all. If the Germans know there is a British officer in that part of the country they'll comb it from end to end. However," he added, smiling, "everything is possible. You can try."

"You'll have to live in a hole in the ground," General Kosta added cheerfully. And, later, that is exactly what I did. . . .

Kolya's Sad Chant To Spring

Springtime was stirring as Kolya and I rode our horses through the plum orchards which cover the eastern crest of the Bosnian hills. Meadows were gilded with the new green of winter wheat. Larks were singing in a blue sky. As we rode, Kolya and I were singing, too.

*To the Kozara
Hillside dreary,
Came a mother
Weeping, weary. . . .*

Kolya was going to the woods of the Fruska Gora, along the south bank of the Danube, to take over command of the small Partisan detachments which were active there. He was a stern Partisan commander of three years' standing; at thirty, he was already old by Partisan standards. After the war they were to give him command of a regular division. Kolya's rasping tenor, chanting Partisan songs of war and sadness, was almost tuneful that day of early spring, for the blood and misery of the winter's fighting were behind us.

"We'll soon be able to sleep out in the open again," Kolya was saying. "There's no season like the spring for Partisans."

For months now we had known nothing but rain and snow and mud. In the high hills at our back I had watched many of our men, in that winter of 1943-44, walk barefoot through the snow but for a few sodden rags—known in these parts as *shufalitse*—wrapped about their frozen feet and legs. Not once, but fifty times, we had

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Brian Johnston, radio's stunt man

Every Saturday night he lands in trouble with a microphone round his neck. It's his job to give listeners a thrill. But he gets quite a kick out of it himself by **ELKAN ALLAN**

THE SLEEK GREY STATION WAGON drew up silently outside the Dome at Brighton. A dance was in progress, and there was a lot of money in the till. Out of the car jumped a tall, pink-cheeked man in a mackintosh. There was the sound of breaking glass, a girl screamed, and the tall man rushed back to the car, carrying a jangling cash box. The car shot away and the manager of the Dome hurriedly put in a 999 call. Within three minutes the station wagon was passed at more than fifty miles an hour by a police car that nosed it off the road. Forced to stop and faced by a policeman, the panting driver gave up. "They've got me!" he told ten million people, and after a pleasant and informative chat with his captors he was allowed to drive off home. For the tall man was Brian Johnston, B.B.C. star, and this was the 99th stunt he had pulled off for his "Let's Go Somewhere" spot in *In Town Tonight*. The purpose was to give the listeners a thrill and at the same time to demonstrate the efficiency of the Brighton police car radio system—for although the "smash-and-grab" had been rehearsed, its location and his interception were not.

Walking into trouble every Saturday night for over two years would reduce most people to nervous wrecks, but this brisk, beak-nosed Etonian, aged thirty-eight, thoroughly enjoys

it. Among his more hair-raising experiences he has had four-inch nails thrown like darts at cigarettes stuck in his ears, been shot out of a pilot's automatic ejection seat on to a testing-mattress at forty-five miles an hour, and lain on a table while an ice-skater jumped over him. "It's great fun and adds zest to life," he says—and means it.

Juggles Plays On To The Air

Brian Johnston's official title at the B.B.C. is "Outside Broadcasting Assistant," although, for simplicity's sake, he just calls himself "Commentator." Besides organizing his weekly hazards, he is in charge of relays from London theatres, and spends much time working out complicated timetables and juggling with the scripts of shows so that the more interesting bits are on the stage at the moment the B.B.C. wants to put them on the air. This sometimes involves persuading managements to take a scene out of the last act and put it in the first, at the same time not letting the theatre audience realize it.

Brian looks the way he sounds—healthy, well-groomed, self-confident. He has a breezy manner which he keeps throughout most of his stunts, losing it only when in real peril, such as when being held upside-down by a strong woman. This was one broadcast he had to call

off in the middle, for his braces were giving way and all the money was falling out of his pockets.

He is a one-man production unit and has to make all the arrangements for his Saturday night spots. He thinks them up himself, and if the producer of *In Town Tonight* does not like his ideas, Brian challenges him with, "think of a better one yourself." Veteran engineer, Vic "Spud" Murphy, is always putting up suggestions, and every post contains ideas from listeners. A frequent one is to broadcast from inside a lion's mouth. But Brian explains: "I'm not a highly-paid film stunt man. And I've got a wife and kids." One possible stunt he has consistently refused to perform is to broadcast during a parachute jump, for despite great courage he has no head for heights.

Every stunt involves careful planning and timing, and he sometimes spends as long as a fortnight getting ready. An advance party of engineers descends on the chosen spot and carries out involved tests with microphones and cables. "Spud" Murphy has to transport six hundred-weight of equipment to the scene, including an ordinary portable wireless set which gives him a better cue to come in sharply than the elaborate official B.B.C. system.

So that he can tell listeners what he is doing, Brian must always carry a microphone or have it strapped to his chest. Then the cables have to be kept out of the way of the action. One night he thought he would try singing in the street, but, so that passers-by would think he was a genuine street singer, the microphone and wires had to be concealed. He dressed up in a battered hat, buttoned an old mackintosh up to the neck and tucked a scarf round. This hid the mike effectively, but there was still the problem of the heavy cable. Finally, it was taken inside his shirt, brought out through the bottom of his trousers, and then covered in the gutter with some newspapers.

Worse Than Stunt Riding

He stood in the darkness of Charing Cross Road warbling "Tipperary" and "Pack Up Your Troubles" in a cracked voice, and collected threepence halfpenny in the two minutes he was on the air. He says: "It was far worse than riding pillion on a motor-bike crashing through a nineteen-foot-high wall of barrels, which I did on another occasion. Then I had every confidence in the chap who was driving me; but to stand alone and feel that people were either pitying or deriding me was terrible."

This was, in a way, a repeat performance of a practical joke he organized in 1933 while at New College, Oxford. After a concert there, he disguised himself as a pavement artist, having "borrowed" some valuable paintings from the college walls. He collected a hat full of money from the concertgoers, but when a proctor gave him a penny, there was such a guffaw from his friends that he was detected.

After Oxford he joined the family coffee business, but although he went through the motions of sucking coffee beans and spitting them out in the approved fashion, he could not cultivate a taste for the business. After the stimulus of the war, he rejected the possibility of donning black jacket and striped trousers and going off to the City every day again. Stewart MacPherson, who was attached for a time to the Grenadier Guards, in which Brian served as a



Take It From Here stars Jimmy Edwards (sucking lemon), Joy Nichols and Dick Bentley listen as Johnston tries out the famous Edwards euphonium. Sitting, left, is Mrs. Johnston



One of Johnston's famous broadcasts: talking to listeners while being sawn in half by illusionist Dorothy Harbin. "It adds zest to life," he says

major, and who had heard some of his concert party efforts, suggested he should try broadcasting. He landed a job with the Outside Broadcasting section in 1946, and his first task was to look after *Round the Halls*.

"I visited every music hall in southern England—including one with notices in the dressing-rooms saying 'Please hang up your boots and shoes as the management cannot be responsible if these are eaten by rats.' They really did eat them, too!" He started his stunts with a night locked in the Chamber of Horrors at Madame Tussaud's, when it was decided to pep up *In Town Tonight* with some live action.

He is an excitable person and has difficulty in keeping his voice on a normal level when he gets worked up. Listeners ask him whether the wild enthusiasm, which breaks into his voice during a particularly thrilling part of a broadcast, is faked. He retorts that if anything is false, it is the more sober sounding sections. He was bubbling with excitement when he acted as stooge for the Crazy Gang. They invited him to take part in their barber-shop scene.

Tried To Make Him Hysterical

"They lent me an overall suit that was supposed to be waterproof but wasn't, and a wig that they pulled off the moment I sat down," he recalls. "Then they really started in. They shampooed me with green, yellow, blue, and pink dyes, they threw buckets of water all over me, sloshed me with whitewash, put a lighted cigarette on the seat, shoved soap in my mouth to stop me from telling the listeners how excruciating it all was, rolled me in the mess and tickled me. The prop suit wasn't any use, because they pulled up my shirt, dragged open my trousers and poured in cans of water. I tried to keep my commentator's *savoir-faire*, but was not very successful, I'm afraid. Jimmy Nervo

told me afterwards that they had decided to give me the works and make me hysterical." It took him an hour and a half to get cleaned up.

It is probably his obviously schoolboy love of excitement that occasionally causes people to take advantage of him. It happened again when he stood in goal for the Harringay ice-hockey team. "They were supposed to take one gentle shot each in turn, but instead they ganged up on me and let eight pucks fly at me almost at once, until I didn't know where I was. They hit me in every part of the body, and even when I fell down they continued to hammer away at me." This experience accounts for some of the bald patches at the back of his head, he says.

For a fearless adventurer, he has a curious sensitivity. When he was lying naked on a slab in a Turkish bath, being pummelled by a masseur, with a microphone slung round him so that listeners could hear the slaps, he suddenly felt terribly embarrassed. "I felt that somehow all the listeners could see me. Silly, but uncontrollable."

That was one stunt his wife, Pauline, did not attend, but usually she accompanies him. When he is doing a particularly daring feat, however, she just stays at home and listens. "She panics a bit sometimes," he says. They and their children, Barry, aged two, and Clare, six months, live in a house which achieves one of his ambitions in being within applause distance of Lord's cricket ground. "Cricket is my passion, and I'm lucky to be one of the regular television cricket commentators in my more restful moments at the B.B.C."

It was he who discovered West Indian bowler Ramadhin's secret of lightly touching his cap when about to bowl leg-breaks. "I counted them very carefully before I mentioned it, and out of twenty cap-touchings, twenty leg-breaks followed." Ramadhin immediately denied the

trick and stopped touching his cap, but before they left England, Goddard, the captain, more or less admitted Johnston was right.

He is so crazy about cricket that when he and fellow-commentator John Ellison shared a room at the B.B.C., they turned it into a cricket pitch. The wicket was the wastepaper basket, boundaries were the walls, and the batsman was out if he hit the ball into the IN tray. But when Brian came back from a holiday, he found he had been moved into the tiny rooms he now occupies. "The head of the department told me he had had enough of office cricket."

Catching Victims Off Guard

Johnston is not afraid of getting the sack for high spirits, however, for they are his stock-in-trade. Moreover, the B.B.C. is glad to have him on the staff at around £1,000 a year, because most of the big-name commentators have left the Corporation and now work as freelances. This way they can earn at least £3,000 a year. But so far Brian has resisted the temptation: "I like my job as it is. I get enough money, and I can think of the job without worrying how I can make more out of it."

He is experimenting with hidden microphones, to catch his victims off guard. At Easter he dressed up as an R.A.C. patrolman, with a miniature microphone hidden under his lapel. The drivers he questioned were genuine and unrehearsed, but their replies were far too meek for his liking. "If only some would get annoyed and swear at me, then we'd have an exciting programme. Everyone is too well mannered."

To future victims who suspect that the postman or policeman or seemingly dim-witted stranger who asks them questions at around 7.30 p.m. on a Saturday evening might be Brian Johnston in disguise, he gives a provocative piece of advice: "Let yourself go!" THE END

CONCLUDING A TWO-PART STORY

Little Tembi

by DORIS LESSING

ILLUSTRATED BY WILLIAM LITTLE



JANE McCLUSTER had spoilt Tembi since she nursed him back to life as a sickly baby. As a five-year-old he was getting as much money as older boys herding cattle on her husband's South African farm. And he was indolent—twice he had fallen asleep and allowed cattle to stray. Willie McCluster had spanked him, as a lesson—but within a month he was asking for more money. And soon he was appealing, almost demanding of Jane that she should let him nurse her own children. When she refused, he stole her jewellery. This time, Willie beat him in earnest. The incident made both Willie and Jane uncomfortable—and they weren't allowed to forget it.

IT WAS NOT A WEEK before Tembi again demanded to be made nurse to the children; he was now big enough, he said, and Jane had promised. Jane was so astonished she could not speak. She went indoors, shutting the door on him, and when she knew he was still lingering there for speech with her, sent out the houseboy to say she was not having a thief as a nurse for her children.

A few weeks later he asked again, and again she refused. Then he took to waylaying her every day, sometimes several times a day: "Missus, my missus, let me work near you, let me work near you." Always she refused, and always she grew more angry.

At last, the sheer persistence of the thing defeated her. She said: "I won't have you as a nurse, but you can help me with the vegetable garden."

Tembi was sullen, but he presented himself at the garden next day, which was not the one near the house, but the fenced patch near the compound, for the use of the natives. Jane employed a garden boy to run it, telling him when was the time to plant, explaining about compost and the proper treatment of soil. Tembi was to help him.

She did not often go to the garden; it ran of itself. Sometimes, passing, she saw that beds full of vegetables were running to waste; this meant that a new batch of natives were in the compound, natives who had to be educated afresh to eat what was good for them. But now she had had her last baby, and employed two nannies in the nurseries. She felt free to spend more time at the clinic and at the garden. Here she made a point of being friendly to Tembi. She was not a person to bear grudges, though a feeling that he was not to be trusted barred him as a nurse.

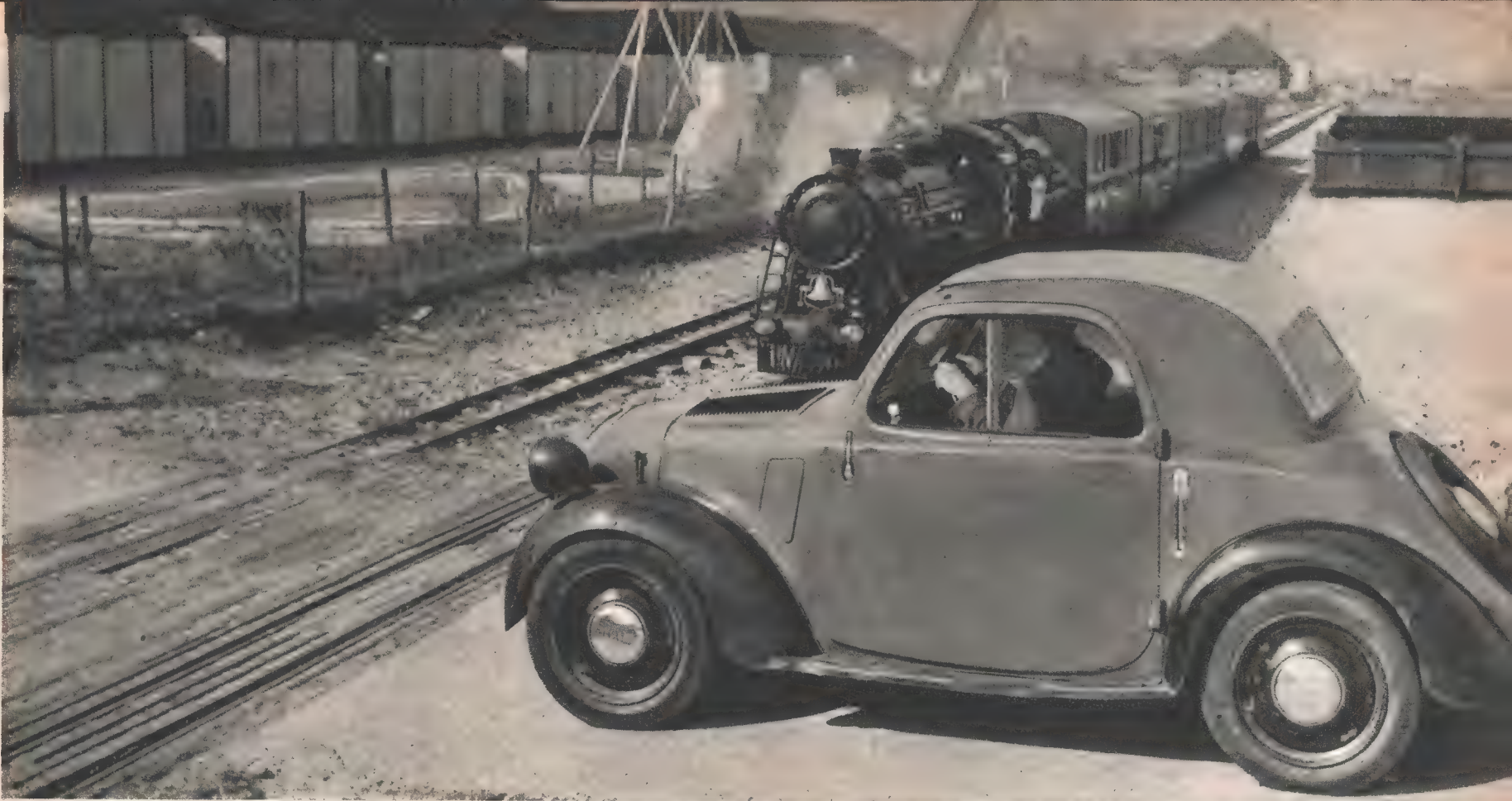
She would talk to him about her own children, and how they were growing, and would soon be going to school in the city. She would talk to him about keeping himself clean, and eating the right things; how he must earn good money so that he could buy shoes to keep his feet from the germ-laden dust; how he must be honest, always tell the truth, and be obedient.

While she was in the garden he would follow her around, his hoe trailing forgotten in his hand, his eyes fixed on her. "Yes, missus; yes, my missus," he repeated continually. And when she left, he would implore: "When are you coming again? Come again soon, my missus."

She took to bringing him her own children's books when they were too worn for use in the

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She looked helplessly at the rifle. "Tembi, why did you do it?" The tears poured down his cheeks. "I don't know, missus," he said



"Black Prince," a miniature Canadian-type locomotive, runs up to a level crossing. Last year, the line carried more than 300,000 passengers

The Captain runs a fairy-tale railway

by GRAHAM DUKES

Legends about it grow in fantasy every year. It's even got a ghost train. But the only thing it minds is being called a toy

ONE HAND STEADY on the miniature controls which stand roughly on a level with his hunched-up knees, eyes fixed on the fifteen-inch-wide permanent way glistening across the pancake flatness of Romney Marsh, Driver G. A. B. ("Gabby") Barlow eases the crack Bluecoaster Express out of Hythe Station on its non-stop run to Dungeness, fourteen miles away.

Behind the *Winston Churchill*, a one-third sized, 4-6-2 replica of the giants used by the Canadian Pacific Railway, cheering holiday-makers sit in low-slung cream and blue coaches. Old hands tell newcomers not to stand up too suddenly unless they want to crack their heads on the low roof; knowing mothers who have travelled this way before tell their young to come right away from the window when the up-train passes by with only two feet to spare.

Gathering speed, the *Winston*—"rakish, handsome, insolent monster with the rugged braggadocio of the Western Prairies," as the literature of the Romney, Hythe and Dymchurch Light Railway puts it—flies past the houses backing on to the Royal Military Canal, through halts and over level crossings, on its way to the sea.

Out on the Marsh the sheep scamper away from the fences as "Gabby" pulls the cord to sound the low moaning "wooooooh-a-a-a-h" Canadian Pacific whistle. Just beyond Dymchurch, schoolboys crowd the footbridge to jot down numbers, and the campers stand and wave near the Duke of York Bridge. Through New Romney, with its yards, shops, sidings and railway museum, through Lade and Pilot Halt, "Gabby" takes the Bluecoaster, pulling up at Dungeness dead on time, having covered 13.8 miles in forty-five minutes—which, as some slick

young arithmetician is bound to tell him any minute now, indicates an overall timed speed of 18.4 miles an hour.

Then he steps out on to the platform, stretches an elbow on top of the tender and waits. From the cars rushes a swarm of schoolboys, notebooks and loco-spotting journals at the ready. "Sir," says the first earnest young expert, "is it true that your track is laid in thirty-foot lengths, weighing twenty-four pounds to the yard, with Baltic sleepers twenty-two inches apart?"

"That is so," says "Gabby" gravely in man-to-man tones.

"That would make it about 3,000 sleepers per mile of track," says another juvenile inquirer.

The Young Experts Take Over

Soon everyone on the platform joins in a learned discussion on the superiority of staggered rail joints as a method of stopping side-to-side roll on a fifteen-inch line, where thirty miles an hour is about equivalent to 100 miles an hour on a standard-gauge job.

The crowd increases as more coaches empty, the adults straightening up from a jack-knife position as they reach the platform, while younger passengers swarm over the engine and argue over such mysteries as ball-bearing return cranks with self-aligning races, Klinger reflecting water gauges, Westinghouse airbrake donkey pumps, Gibbins bogies, and the water pick-up scoops which (so they say) are lowered and raised by a vacuum cylinder off the automatic brakeline.

"Gabby," a dyed-in-the-wool light-railway enthusiast doing the work he likes best, enjoys all this to the full—while it lasts. He knows, as



Captain Howey inspects the fifteen-inch line which he built at a cost of £2,000 a mile

every one of the fifty-odd employees of the Romney, Hythe and Dymchurch knows, that sooner or later the inevitable fond mother will appear to thank everybody concerned "for the nice ride on the toy railway."

By now, "Gabby" has learned to take this with only a slight wince, but stationmaster Fred Katt, who last year handled more than 300,000 passengers at Hythe Station, has not yet learned to keep quiet when he hears such a slighting reference to the line he loves.

"They can call it anything they like," says Fred Katt, when thoroughly aroused. "They can call it the 'little railway,' the 'teensy-weensy railway,' or even, as some of the Marsh folk do, the 'Rummy, Dippy and Hot'—not



New Romney Station on the fairy-tale line that the Marsh folk call the "Rummy, Dippy and Hot"

when I'm around, of course. But it's not a *toy*. It's a real railway, run like a real railway—and run much better than some I could name, but won't. We've got more than a dozen engines, and a hundred wagons and coaches. What's more, anyone who wants to can book right through to Dymchurch from Waterloo. We keep to a schedule."

Legends about this unique little railway, all created by residents of the Cinque Ports area, grow in fantasy every year. Holidaymakers swallow them hook, line and sinker. One of the oldest of these jokes is that at some undefined time in the last fifteen years, at an undefined point between Maddieson's Holiday Camp and the halt at Lade, someone threw a rolled-up newspaper into the front wheels of an engine and brought it to a dead stop in ten yards.

There is another story of a six-wheeled lorry which somehow got stuck on a railway crossing. According to one version the driver just ducked, shouted to everybody to hold tight—and steamed under without harm. Another variation has it that the driver, peering through the darkness, stopped underneath and stepped out because he thought he was in Hythe Station.

Local wags, obviously of the opinion that every self-respecting railway should have a ghost train, have invented one. It has now passed into local folk-lore (strictly for visitors' consumption only) as a roaring little monster that can be seen any time after midnight, each March 31, carriages brilliantly lit, whistle sounding and a Chinese midget driver at the controls.

"We don't mind these yarns," the staff says. "They're good for trade anyway. They started telling them when the line was only an idea in the Captain's head."

The "Captain," always referred to in that way by the line's personnel, all of whom are ex-Servicemen, is Captain John Howey, who built the little line in 1926. A racing motorist of note

and a railway enthusiast all his life, he was already the owner of 400 yards of fifteen-inch gauge track, an eight-ton locomotive and assorted rolling stock, run for his own amusement at Staughton Manor, in Huntingdonshire.

His ambition all his life had been to build and run a commercial light railway. He surveyed the Romney Marsh area, negotiated with farmers who were not anxious to see their fields bisected by a railway, nursed a special Act through Parliament, and then set to work to build the track, at a cost of £2,000 a mile. "We couldn't lay a mile for five times that today," says the general manager, Lieutenant-Colonel R. B. Y. Simpson. "And it's the same with locos. In 1926, locos like ours cost £2,000 each. Today, £10,000 would be nearer the mark."

The Romney Line prospered from the start,

The Battle Of Baltinglass

It all began one misty day in 1950, when the sub-postmistress resigned in a tiny Eire village. The culmination was the Government's resignation—and next week's General Election in Eire. Read Lawrence Earl's vivid reconstruction of the "storm in a teacup" that ousted a Cabinet.

Amazing Africa

On a recent six-month tour of Africa, Alastair Scobie saw some of the people who lead exciting lives in the world's most colourful continent. His brilliant series of articles begins

in John Bull next week

and Captain Howey next built the extension out to Dungeness Lighthouse on a rocky headland five miles from New Romney. Unlike today, when passengers sit in roofed carriages on upholstered seats, early rolling stock was open to the sky and the benches were hard.

"Travellers liked being out in the open," says the general manager. "Everyone was satisfied. Then one day a small boy stood up to his full height and caught his head on the bridge. After that the Ministry made us put wire netting over the tops of each coach. That gave the local people another chance for a bit of fun. They christened it the 'Chicken Coop Express.' The name still sticks."

Two Problems: Sheep And Boys

Small boys and sheep and their impact on the R.H. and D.R., alias "The Friendly Line," alias "The Smallest Public Railway in the World," are recurring subjects of conversation among the staff, on duty and off. Romney Marsh is a favourite summer camping ground for London schoolboys, and a popular game locally is to explore the permanent way when a train is about due, lie flat on the track and press one ear against a rail to listen to the roar of an on-coming train. "This wouldn't be so bad," says Stationmaster Katt, "if they lay down facing the right way. But those kids never do."

The sheep problem is not so serious as it used to be just after the war, when much of the fencing had fallen down. But once a sheep is on the track, according to Stationmaster Katt, it seems to lose its inferiority complex.

"It's a funny thing," says Katt. "On comes the train whistling hard. You'd think the sheep would run away to safety. But do they? No. They just run in front of the train, slow down when they begin to tire and then come to a dead stop. You can say 'shoo' or 'shoo-shoo' and you can yell, but they just stand there like a lot of—well, like a lot of sheep. The driver has to step out and lift them back over the fence."

Accidents on the line are few. If a carriage breaks loose from a moving train the brakes apply themselves automatically. Points and signals are interlocked, so that even if a signalman should make a mistake it is impossible for a train to run on a wrong line. Each train is under observation and reported upon by telephone during the whole of its run.

Line That Kept A Secret

War hit the Romney hard. Shortly after Dunkirk the line was requisitioned. An anti-aircraft unit mounted on armoured cars built in the company's workshops patrolled the Marsh throughout the war. It was manned by a crew of five, was dive-bombed and strafed and was highly unpopular with troops bound for Hythe for a night out from Marsh camps, because it always managed to get in front of "leave" trains and threw the whole timetable out of gear.

Late in 1943, odd-shaped piping and engineering gear, which everybody pretended not to notice, began to arrive at New Romney Station. It was carried on Romney trucks to Dungeness, where it was received by technicians who never talked about their work. A year later the secret was out—the R.H. and D.R. had been carrying the pipes and fittings for Pluto (Pipe Line Under The Ocean), which ran from just beyond Littlestone to Boulogne.

While other light railways all over Great Britain are closing down for lack of support, the Romney goes from strength to strength. This year there is talk of adding a buffet-car to the Bluecoaster, although how passengers will be able to lift a cup of tea to face level without poking everybody else in the eye is a problem exciting the Cinque Ports legpullers now getting ready with their Festival season's crop of fairy tales. All along the line from Hythe to Dungeness Lighthouse they are saying that the smallest public railway in the world is looking round for a troupe of midgets to serve the tea—Chinese midgets preferred.

THE END



Belita and husband Joel McGinnis get ready for their brother-and-sister comedy act in *London Melody*. "Anything she sets her mind to," he says, "she gets it licked right off"

Belita, the rich girl who made good

by KEITH ELLIS

The squire's pretty daughter swims with Weissmuller, acts with Laughton, dances with Dolin—and skates in a class by herself

AT TWENTY-SIX, BELITA, a golden blonde with hazel eyes and tiptilted nose, has played principal boy in an ice pantomime, swum in Johnny Weissmuller's *Aquacade*, acted Chekhov and Shakespeare with Charles Laughton's Hollywood Players, partnered Anton Dolin in ballet, starred in films both skating and straight, and played exhibition tennis matches. She is also an expert ballroom dancer. "Anything she sets her mind to," says Joel McGinnis, her American actor husband, "she gets it licked—right off the reel."

The ability to "get things licked" has been with her all her life. At two she had her first ballet shoes, at four she started to skate. By the age of nine she had won the Imperial Society's certificate in Cecchetti, a difficult ballet routine made famous by Cecchetti, of Diaghileff's ballet. When she was twelve she made her first

public appearance as Anton Dolin's partner in a performance of *The Blue Bird* at a party organized by Elsa Maxwell in Cannes. Noël Coward, who played the piano, said after her performance: "I was told I was to play for a little girl. Had I realized I was to play for an artist I should have practised."

Still only twelve, she was selected as one of Britain's four skating representatives in the Olympic Games. She won silver and gold medals. On her fourteenth birthday she made her first professional appearance with Anton Dolin in *Rhapsody on Ice*, a light opera, at Covent Garden. He was so pleased with her performance that he took her to the Mogador Theatre in Paris to be star skater. Since then she has been monotonously successful at whatever she has tried.

In spite of her varied achievements, however, Belita is still primarily a skating star in the

public's mind. And skating is the one form of entertainment where a single slip is most obvious to the public and most painful to the star. "Slip?" asks Belita. "I'll say I do. And it's something you can't explain. Sometimes I can't get through a show without falling—and when I fall, I fall! It happens at the silliest times. I may have finished a complicated, difficult movement. I go to take my bow and there I am, down with a bang on the ice."

Once, in a Winnipeg winter with the temperature at forty below zero, she shivered through a full show of difficult evolutions. Going outside to meet her fans, she slipped on the roadway and knocked herself out. Another time she zoomed straight off a portable rink in a New York night club and ended up under a table. The most embarrassing occasion was at the opening of a brand new arena in Washington. A skating chorus came on, whirled round a little and opened their ranks for the star to appear. As they bowed, Belita swept on to the stage—nose first. "To make it worse, I was wearing a long skirt and couldn't get up."

House With Thirty Bedrooms

There is nothing of "mill to mansion" or "local girl makes good" in Belita's life story. She had every advantage that money and birth could bring. "I've been lucky all my life," she says, "too lucky." Belita Gladys Olive Lyne Jepson-Turner was born near Nether Wallop, Hampshire, on the estate of Garlogs, which included four villages and a house with nearly thirty bedrooms. Her father was the squire, Major William Jepson-Turner, who had fought in the Boer War and the first World War. Her grandfather, Dr. Bertram Lyne-Stevens, was consulting physician to several royal families. Belita, her grandmother's name, was also the name of an Argentinian railway founded by her grandfather and of one of his cattle ranches. In Spanish it means "little bell."

The usual disadvantage of such a background is parental opposition to a career on the stage. Belita had none of this. Her mother had been prevented by her father from entering the theatre, and insisted that her daughter should have every encouragement. Only the best tuition was good enough. She was entered at the Cone School in London, and was simultaneously taught to skate by Gerschweiler, then Swiss world champion. Between ten and fourteen she was taught ballet by Anton Dolin. After her first professional successes, it seemed that she was all set for a brilliant career on the British stage. Then she had an accident at Covent Garden and injured her back badly. Her mother decided that sunshine and a long rest would probably help her recovery and took her to America. That was in 1939.

When war broke out, mother and daughter were unable to draw money from Britain and had the choice of returning or making money in the States. They decided to stay. By now, Belita's back was almost better and she took her first job in the States as a ballerina in the New York Ballet Company, at fifteen the family breadwinner.

There Was More Money On Ice

Her weekly wage packet, however, was hardly big enough to keep herself, let alone her mother and the French maid who was travelling with them. There was nothing for it but to abandon ballet and find something more lucrative. She took a job as an exhibition skater between ice-hockey matches and soon graduated to being guest star at visiting ice-shows. Next she was engaged by the Hotel New Yorker to skate on a portable rink in the cabaret. From there she joined *Ice-capades*, a travelling ice-show, in which she stayed two years.

One day, a film producer who had been watching the show saw her after the performance and said: "Would you like to do a couple of skating sequences in a film?" She agreed. But when

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Mrs. Alda Nettleship fought the plan. "I still hope there'll be a town meeting," she declares



The church with its Norman doorway is worth a snapshot; but visitors to Market Rasen are rare

Town that wants to be a village

by HARRY HOPKINS

Market Rasen council has few assets beyond a clock and some shovels, and its busiest department is Charlie Smith's graveyard. "To put it vulgarly," says the Chairman, "we're broke"

IN HIS SMALL COTTAGE in King Street, Councillor W. R. Walsham, J.P.—a bricklayer by trade—poked the fire carefully and said: "A halfpenny plus a halfpenny equals a penny. But if you haven't a halfpenny? People say we're lowering ourselves in Market Rasen. But we're sunk. What I'd like to know is how can you be lower than sunk?"

This was a point which no one, it seemed, had been able to clear up; and thus it had come about that Market Rasen, which Dickens pronounced "the second sleepiest town in England," last year acquired yet a further title to fame by becoming the first town in recent British municipal history to make official application to be reduced forthwith to the rank of a village.

Yet it seemed, altogether, a little odd. Walk down King Street and along Queen Street with its shops; past the stone-settled square, the church with its Norman doorway and fifteenth-century tower, the Corn Exchange, and no place ever seemed more permanent, more completely assured than this compact little market town in the heart of the Lincolnshire aerodrome country. It has 2,210 citizens, an endowed grammar school, the *Market Rasen Mail* (published weekly), a Liberal Institute, a gasholder, two Methodist chapels (one plain, one pillared), a cemetery, and the Market Rasen racecourse.

Tuesday is market day in Market Rasen, and in the afternoons, when the auctions are over, the farmers stand around in the corridors of the Gordon Arms or on the pavements, squat, slow men, talking prices. The market, they'll tell you, is not what it used to be. But in front of them, on the square, are laid out rabbits and potatoes and knitting wool and young fruit trees and goldfish, though, since some little way back in Rasen's history the vicar complained of the smell, the pigs and sheep have been shifted to Wednesdays and the other side of the town.

Black-edged Demand Notes?

To the passing eye, in fact, Market Rasen has everything such a place should have—except, perhaps, a public convenience, and a public convenience was one of the principal planks in the platform on which the citizens (infected, no doubt, by the radical mood of the times) elected Councillor Clifford Hall, the King Street grocer, to office in 1946.

It was, you might think, a modest enough demand—but what happened? Twelve dismayed councillors, instead of compassing this desirable end, found themselves confronted by soaring costs, rising wages, a series of overdrafts, the raised eyebrows of the district auditor, and an unprecedented rate of twenty-five shillings in the pound—which, a local wag suggested, fully justified the issue of black-edged demand notes.

Meanwhile, roads which had been unrepaired for years' continued to go unrepaired; the cracked old sewers let in so much water that

the sewage works ran up an enormous electricity bill pumping it out; the drinking-water supply failed to muster sufficient pressure to climb to the new houses which the council had incautiously placed upon a slight slope. The public convenience seemed farther away than ever.

On Saturday, October 7, 1950, the Crisis—which could be no longer denied—burst across the front page of the *Market Rasen Mail*, pushing even the breeding sheep prices to page three. To the delegation from the chamber of trade, the clerk of the council delivered what the editor praised as "Mr. Beckett's brilliant review." Said Beckett: "Look at the roads! Look at the footpaths! Smell the sewers! We feel that at last the time has come for strong action." The chairman, Councillor W. R. Walsham, summed up: "To put it vulgarly," he said, "we're broke."

The Council Made Its Choice

Faced by the choice of starving or strangling, the urban district council decided, by eight votes to three, to put an end to it all, gratefully accepting the painless method discovered by its clerk, and instructing him to apply for "deurbanization" and delivery to the custody of the neighbouring rural district of Caistor.

When presented with this proposition, the county council, Beckett told me, seemed rather surprised. "In fact," he confided, "I don't think they really believed it at first." This lack of faith was, perhaps, excusable. Urban districts often aspire to become boroughs. Boroughs yearn to be county boroughs. But a town handing in its checks was decidedly new.

How had it happened? In part it was Market Rasen's fault; in part it was Market Rasen's misfortune. But both fault and misfortune were rooted in the past. As Charlie Gibson, compositor at the *Mail*, said: "We're suffering now for the failings of our forbears."

The story starts with the stage coaches which met at Market Rasen and made the place a thriving town. The coaches came and went and the railway reached Market Rasen, but still the citizens lived on in the coaching age. Government, they believed, was an unnecessary evil. So that when the Town Hall arose, in due course, it was built—and is still owned—by private enterprise. When moving pictures came, the Town Hall became the Town Hall Cinema.

The market square? The market square, of course, is Mrs. Alda Nettleship's. When the manorial rights came up for sale and the council didn't want to buy, they were snapped up instead by a local estate agent. Now the market tolls and the parking fees which might be enriching the town go to the estate agent's widow—who also owns the cattle market.

In the autumn of 1950, time caught up with Market Rasen. To the council, meeting as usual in a rented room, the clerk voiced the brutal truth: "What have you to lose? You own nothing. You have no offices. You certainly



Market Rasen, called by Dickens "the second sleepest town in England." On the left of this view from the Gordon Arms is the Town Hall Cinema, with the controversial town clock. The market square and its parking fees belong to Mrs. Nettleship

have a refuse-collecting vehicle—but there is a loan on that. Besides that you have a few wheelbarrows, a few spades, a little place at the corner of Mill Lane, and the mortuary. I do not know what else you have."

This was the bleak situation which the frugal city fathers, priding themselves no doubt on their painless rates, bequeathed to their successors in 1950—the year of reckoning. Those successors faced it as stoutly as they could. As the rates threatened to rise to thirty shillings, they sacked two roadmen. That left three—and foreman Vic Robbins. Also, to run Market Rasen, two scavengers, one sewage farm attendant and Charlie Smith, the sexton.

Scope for further economies seemed limited. The clerk, a local solicitor, was part-time and also threw in his staff and offices; the medical officer, Dr. R. J. R. Macredy, watched over the town for £55 a year; and W. C. Boyall collected the rates in his time off from being registrar of births, marriages and deaths, and fuel overseer.

Market Rasen, in fact, has only a single local government officer charged to give its needs his whole-time and undivided attention, and he is a brisk little Lancashire man named John Potts. Potts combines in his person the offices of engineer, surveyor and sanitary inspector, and receives for these manifold services the salary of

£495. For most practical purposes John Potts is the Government of Market Rasen.

I found him—together with the council's duplicator, the council's typewriter and the council's half-dozen chairs—in the two gaslit rooms which the council rents above an insurance office in Mill Road. The time to speak would assuredly come, said John Potts, but the time was not yet. You had the B.B.C. broadcasting that Market Rasen possessed only two wheelbarrows and four spades. It gave quite a wrong impression. After all, he could pick up the phone and borrow a steam-roller from the county council any day of the week. It made people think Market Rasen was doing nothing.

Bunting For A Royal Visit

And John Potts, certainly, was far from doing that. When he wasn't in one street condemning bad eggs in his rôle of sanitary inspector, he was in the next, re-angling the pavement in his capacity as surveyor, or investigating a case of flooding in his office of engineer. When things got really tough he was not above rolling up his sleeves and getting down to it with the men.

For when you are the government of a town many unexpected duties are apt to devolve upon

you. There was, for instance, the week when Princess Mary visited Market Rasen. The rates hardly ran to items like bunting, but Market Rasen, as usual, looked expectantly at John Potts. He borrowed some bunting from the Gordon Arms, borrowed some more from the next-door urban district council. Market Rasen supplied the ladders—and Vic Robbins.

Robbins himself, in between fixing bunting and supervising road mending, doubles as local fire chief, the engine, fortunately, being furnished by the county. And though there are citizens who grumble at the siren which summons the volunteers, the fire service is admittedly one of the brighter spots in Market Rasen's record. While all "arrivers" get attendance pay, the first five who jump on the engine and go to the fire get "fire pay," too. At the last conflagration, caused by an overturned lamp in the Methodist chapel, the engine was on the spot in four minutes.

Fire engines apart, it is a nice point which of John Potts's rôles makes the greatest challenge to his professional capacities. Being public health officer in a town where two-thirds of the houses have no inside taps, and "closet conversions" proceed at the comfortable rate of seven a year? Surveyor in a town where building by-laws were until recently considered a little grandmotherly? Or is it, after all, more trying to be engineer with



Prosperity came to Market Rasen with the stage coaches. Now, there are only motor buses

a 100-house new estate on your hands, approached by a road which has no foundations?

Whatever the answer, John Potts, by common consent, struggles manfully and conscientiously with these many problems. And Market Rasen should be undyingly grateful. But is it? It is not. As the "Government" of Market Rasen, John Potts must suffer in his solitary person the odium all governments suffer.

Then there is the snow—or what Mrs. Margaret Bayes, of the Gordon Arms, calls the "pack-ice" on the pavements. The snow became the subject of a debate in the council chamber. In fairness, said Councillor W. C. Hall, there were difficulties. If the pavements were swept clear, heavy traffic quickly churned the snow back again. Observed the chairman, Councillor F. A. Hill, a miller: "Other towns have by-laws." Finally, the council, as the *Market Rasen Mail* reported, found its spirits rising at the thought of returning spring. Said Councillor Houlton: "I will be prepared to bet that we have seen the last fall of snow as far as any big fall is concerned."

COUNCILLOR G. R. SPENCER: I will bet you twenty Players.

COUNCILLOR HOULTON: Yes, twenty Players. But there will have to be six inches of snow.

CHAIRMAN: Gentlemen, we cannot have this turned into a gambling saloon.

Mr. Potts was requested to give priority to snow clearance on main roads in future.

Creaking To A Dead Stop

The picture that emerges is clear enough. It is the picture of a town that is creaking to a dead stop, an eighteenth-century "rotten borough" that has somehow survived, petrified, into the twentieth century.

It was not always so. Says Jesse Winn, foreman of the *Mail's* composing room: "I recall the time when you could stand outside there in the street of a morning and watch dozens of young lads going off to 'prentice work—carpenters and tailors and joiners. There were brickyards in the town then, and small foundries and a big brewery and sawmills. Now there's nothing. The lads have to go out." It is not that industrialists have not been invited, tempted with the promise of ample supplies of female labour. But, as Teddy Sharpe, the *Mail's* editor, said: "It's the same with towns as it is with men. 'Poor old chap!' they say. 'What a state he's in! Poor chap! What a pity!' And then they turn up their collars and make their getaway."

For Market Rasen's misfortune is greater than Market Rasen's fault. There are, all told, three Rasens. Middle Rasen—to which people return to retire—is expanding. West Rasen, too, is thriving. Even in Market Rasen itself, new houses line the roads leading out of the town. Farmers still pour into the markets. But none of these contribute a halfpenny to ease Market Rasen's lot. For the inky-fingered antiquarian who, way back in the seventies, drew the urban district's

boundaries, drew his line tight about the houses, enclosing only 976 acres. "We're like Berlin," says Councillor Walsham, "we're surrounded. Only," he adds, "I don't think we're so well off!"

Thus, a penny rate, which in Birmingham today yields £28,080 and in Southend £6,080, in Market Rasen produces £45. Let us consider in the light of this fact the matter of the town clock, Rasen's proudest (and almost only) civic possession. For Editor Sharpe, of the *Mail*, it has been the source of many a bright front-page story. "Everybody in Rasen," he explains, "goes by the town clock; but of course we all know it's wrong." Recently, the council ordered a complete overhaul, putting up the rates a further twopence to do so. But now the clock is under attack again. Citizens have detected a shadow on the dial. This, they complain, causes them to think it is twenty-five minutes past ten when in fact it is only ten minutes to. At the time of writing John Potts has been requested to make a study of the matter.

Let us return to the figures. Over England as a whole the average rate is 15s. 8d. Market Rasen's is 24s. It was to aid such hard-pressed authorities, smoothing out the many inequalities of the rating system, that Whitehall elaborated the system of Exchequer Equalization Grants, made out of national taxation, and awarded according to need. The sum of £1,764—or a 3s. 6d. rate—which Market Rasen receives under this head, just suffices to keep the town tottering precariously along.

The only really flourishing civic department in Market Rasen is Charlie Smith's. Says Sexton Smith, surveying his five crowded acres: "I reckon there's a bigger population in these two cemeteries than in all Market Rasen. Strange how I never have the odd one—always come in twos or threes, sometimes seven of one sex, then seven of the other. But I've had a privilege ninety-nine out of a hundred sextons will never have. I've buried here an old lady of 101 years and ten months—and happy and pleasant right to the end. You could be a gravedigger all your life and take two funerals a week for ten years and never have that privilege."

Despite the warmth of Sexton Smith's welcome, the cemetery remains a liability, costing a 4½d. rate. As the hard figures were laid out before them, the county council's inquiry had to admit it: here was a crisis fit to tax the mighty brain of Hugh Gaitskell himself. Alone, Market Rasen's penny rate brought in £45. Throw in the place with the neighbouring Caistor rural district and, for the combined area, the same penny rate raised £224 15s. 9d.—a sum you could do things with.

Confronted by such powerful arithmetic, the good folk of Market Rasen hastily swallowed their pride—with one exception. The exception was Mrs. Alda Nettleship, Market Rasen's only woman councillor and, by virtue of her late

husband's enterprise, the lady of the manor. Grey-haired and energetic, she made a lone last stand before the county council's tribunal. And still today she keeps the flag of Market Rasen's integrity nailed firmly to the mast.

"We councillors," she told me at her home, "are elected to look after the town. It is our duty to pass on something better than we received. Now, Market Rasen is the centre of this countryside. If you are the centre, things must be built up around YOU, isn't that so? There should have been a plebiscite. But I still hope the public will press for a town meeting."

And while, it must be admitted, Charles Dickens certainly had something, so, too, has Mrs. Nettleship. For though the tempo of Market Rasen is the tempo of Tipperary rather than of Birmingham, no greater mistake could be made than to write the place off as moribund.

Stand with Jesse Winn in the *Mail's* jobbing printing corner and cast an eye over the posters lying on his benches—the Old-Tyme Dancing in the Liberal Institute on Fridays, the "50-50" Dancing to the Cherokees in the Corn Exchange on Saturdays, the Dramatic Society, the 100-voice Methodist Choir, the three scout troops. Go up the stairs to Editor Sharpe's office and watch the people coming in with their scribbled notices of football matches and Young Wives' meetings and "letters to put in the paper." The September Fair, it is true, isn't what it was in the days when the horse market filled the main street, but Easter Monday is still a great day with thousands pouring in from all over the county for the races.

Boundaries Are The Trouble

Market Rasen's trouble, in short, is not a disease of the heart, but a blockage of the arteries. And that today is a disease almost endemic among Britain's 1,500 local authorities, whose boundaries take more account of ancient tradition than of the needs of modern government.

Faced with confusion, conflict and sometimes even breakdown in the creaking, patched local government structure, Whitehall has removed from it more and more of its functions. And democracy is dying at its roots.

"In the four years that I've been on the council," said Councillor Hall in his shop in Market Rasen, "we've had twelve visitors—and six of those were German prisoners of war brought to see how democracy works."

Fortunately, the moral of such serio-comic stories as Market Rasen's has at last been drawn. For three years, since its appointment in October, 1945, a boundary commission laboured at the monumental task of re-drawing the areas of local government. Now the commissioners have given their verdict. They sketch out a "two-tier" structure: large areas necessary for the efficiency of such "utility" services as police, fire and planning, and smaller "second-tier" community areas to handle the "human" services like education, health visiting or care of the aged.

New Deal For Market Rasen?

In a map in the county council's planning offices in Lincoln Castle I got a glimpse of what the deal might do for a place like Market Rasen. On this map Market Rasen appeared as the pivot of a wide-swinging yellow circle. Within this circle were forty or fifty hamlets and villages, in which lived 10,000 people. The yellow circle was Market Rasen's "sphere of influence."

Its death sentence having been first confirmed by the county, then suspended by the Minister, the "second sleepest town in England" today waits with impatience as Whitehall prepares the Solomon's decision which, by uniting heart and arteries again, may bring a steam-roller for John Potts, a public convenience to the square, and new vitality and hope, not only to one ill-used, threadbare town, but also to the nation, which has many Market Rasens.

THE END



"You remember that paper I mentioned," Grace said. "The one about the divorce? Well, I've got it now." Theodore was too staggered to speak

FESTIVAL AT FARBRIDGE

by **J. B. PRIESTLEY**

ILLUSTRATED BY JOHN PIMLOTT

Theodore liked Grace—but this was a fantastic thing she was asking him to do. And yet, after such a story, how could he refuse to do it?

People in the story . . .

COMMODORE TRIBE: an oldish, adventurous character; after weeks of scheming to get Farbridge Council to agree to a Festival he is now official Festival organizer.

LAURA CASEY: secretary to Commodore Tribe and an assistant organizer of the Festival.

THEODORE JENKS: The Commodore's chief assistant until lately. After a misunderstanding with Laura—with whom he is in love—he has left Farbridge; is now in London.

GRACE: an attractive little woman the Commodore met—and lost—in London. She reappeared again in Farbridge, and again disappeared.

MICHAEL SEACOMBE: a young journalist handling publicity for the Festival; Theodore's rival for Laura.

THEODORE was standing in Charing Cross Road, near Cambridge Circus, waiting for a block in the traffic to thin out, and busy with thoughts that were none too cheerful, when he heard a tapping and then a voice calling him.

It was a woman in a taxi; and after a moment's bewilderment he recognized her—for now she had stuck out her head to call him better—as the Commodore's friend who had arrived in Farbridge for the Festival meeting and had then disappeared. She seemed eager to speak to him and was now holding the door open for him. He leapt forward, just as the traffic was about to move on, and flung himself in the cab beside her.

"You do remember me, don't you?" she inquired, anxiously. "I recognized you right off. Mr.—er—Jenkins, isn't it?"

"Jenks. Theodore Jenks."

"Yes, that's it. And I'm—well, you can call

me Grace, if you don't mind. Then I'll just call you Theodore, if that's all right to you. Because 'Mr. Jenks' is a bit standoffish, isn't it?"

Theodore said it was, and asked where they were going, for by this time the taxi had churned its way round Cambridge Circus and was proceeding down Shaftesbury Avenue.

"Well, it was taking me back to my flat," said Grace, apologetically. "It's a little furnished flat just off Piccadilly. Very central, of course, but stuffy and not very homely. But then, I have to keep changing," she added, mysteriously. She put a hand on his arm and gave him an appealing look out of her nice grey eyes. "I wonder if you could spare a few minutes, Theodore."

"I could spare a few hours," he said, with a touch of bitterness. "And you needn't be apologetic about it, because I'm really very glad to see you, Grace."

"That's very nice then. We'll let him take us

to this flat—I can't call it mine, it doesn't feel mine—and then we'll have a little talk."

At Grace's service flat, she ordered tea, and Theodore explained what had happened just before he left Farbridge. "I felt they didn't want me any more, that they could get on better without me, so I cleared out." An apologetic note had crept into his voice.

"I think you were very silly," said Grace warmly. "It doesn't sound like either of them to me. That was a nice girl, that little Miss Casey—and I know a nice girl when I see one. Fond of you, too, she was—I saw that."

The waiter brought in the tea, and they said no more until he had gone and she had poured out two cups of something you could stain a floor with. "And what are you doing now?"

"Well"—Theodore looked and sounded rather embarrassed—"I'm helping this theatrical company that's going to the Festival."

"I didn't know you were an actor."

"I'm not. But I know them—and it was something to do—and it would give me a chance of seeing what happens at Farbridge without bothering anybody. I'm one of the two assistant stage managers, and I have two little parts."

"Well, I never did!" She shook her head at him over her cup. "Go and walk out—and now you're going back with this theatre lot. Not got yourself mixed up with one of the actresses, have you?"

"I suppose I have, in a way," he confessed.

"Enough said!" she cried. "And you don't care tuppence about her, I can see that. It's that nice little Laura all the time, isn't it? And you went an' ran away! T-t-t-t-t!"

Theodore changed the subject. "Look, Grace, I've told you what I did, and I admit I've probably been a fool. What about you? Hadn't you better tell me? Perhaps I could help in some way."

"Perhaps you could," she said slowly. "And then again—I don't know." She waited a moment. "All right, I'll tell you. Finish my tea first, though."

"I come from Nottingham way," she began briskly, "but we needn't bother about that. The point is, I've been married twice. I was very happy the first time, except we couldn't have any children. He had a nice little road transport business—two big lorries, a light lorry and a van—and we were doing quite well. Then, a year before the war, I lost him—one of his drivers was off, so he drove himself, when he had a heavy cold on him, and there was a terrible accident. So I sold the business, what there was of it, and bought an hotel, just the other side of Nottingham, pretty little place it was. Well, I was there a few years, building up the business and coping with the war and all that, and gradually coming to life, you might say. I mean inside myself, where there wasn't anything just after Tom had gone. When a woman's happy with a man, inside herself she builds everything round him, and then if she loses him and he's not there, well it's all silly. If you see what I mean." She looked at him earnestly.

He told her that he did.

GRACE said: "I doubt it, a young chap your age, thinking it's all just getting your arms round 'em, when that's only a small part of it, though very nice, of course. Well, then I did something silly—silliest thing I've ever done. I married again when I never ought to have done. His name was Rudfort, so that's my name—worse luck—Mrs. Rudfort. He was a London man, but had some business up our way, so he kept stopping at my place and being very gentlemanly and attentive. And so he talked me into it, which I ought to have known was all wrong because when a woman's found the right chap, she doesn't need to be talked into it."

She paused. "Well, I married Mr. Rudfort—and that's how I think of him, so you can tell—and then I knew right off we weren't

right for each other at all, no more than a cat and a dog are. For six months I kept my hotel going, though I was going to sell it, and of course he kept on with his business, which was chiefly in London. And then—you'll never guess—I was left a lot of money, nearly two hundred thousand pounds. Yes, I'm rich—though I have to keep reminding myself. I'll tell you how it happened, and it just shows you. I had an Uncle Peter, my mother's eldest brother, a queer old stick who'd gone to be a clerk in London and then got on, something to do with lending money. Well, in the war he didn't like the bombing, so he asked if he could come up and stay with me, 'cos there wasn't much bombing round our way. So he stayed whenever he wanted, and he insisted on paying, though he



"...Take a card—any card.
Take the one at the bottom"

looked a shabby old thing and never spent a penny more than he had to, so I just charged him what he cost me, which wasn't much, and made him comfortable, though he didn't need much looking after. He was one of those dried-up little old men that nobody bothers about, though he'd got a sharp tongue, and sometimes when everybody'd gone to bed he'd sit up and tell me about his experiences in London. Then when the war was over, he didn't come up any more. It was after that that Mr. Rudfort came on the scene, of course. Well, Uncle Peter died, quite sudden, and he went and left me all this money. And then I guessed something." She paused, dramatically.

Theodore smiled. "And I know what it was. Your husband—Rudfort—knew you were going to inherit this money."

"That's clever of you," she cried. "And you're quite right, though, mind you, I can't prove it. But it's my belief—and I'm certain of it—that he knew all along. Because just before we got married, he asked me to sign a paper—he said it was just a little fancy of his—saying that if one of us divorced the other, then the one who got the divorce took everything the other had. It seemed just a piece of silliness to me at the time, and he pointed out that it was worse for him than for me—because if I went off with a man, he'd keep me anyhow, this new man would. But once I'd come into this money and I couldn't live with Mr. Rudfort any longer, then there was nothing silly about it. Mind you, I'm not mean, but he'd done the dirty on me, right from the start, and I made up my mind he wasn't going to have a penny of it, not if I could help it. You can't blame me, can you?"

"No, of course not," said Theodore. "It sounds a queer arrangement, and probably not

legal—I don't know. But that's why the detective followed you to Farbridge?"

"Yes, and as soon as I knew about him, I lost my head and rushed off. And then moved. I keep moving, that's the worst of it. Have to, 'cos of all this horrible spying on me. And that time when I first met the Commodore and we went to the theatre, I left in such a hurry because suddenly I heard him laughing—for once—a few rows behind me. Just like me to choose the one night he was there! And of course I didn't want to run into him after the show and drag the Commodore into the mess. I was ashamed, too. So off I ran."

"But if you've got the money," said Theodore, to whom her story was far from clear, "why do you stay in London? Why don't you go abroad somewhere, out of the way?"

She seemed rather confused. "Well, I couldn't, earlier on, because there was still some of the money to come, and I had to keep seeing solicitors and signing things. I still have, now and again, but I suppose I could go away if I wanted to. But I don't now." She looked defiantly at him. "All right, I'll admit it, though I'm old enough to know better. Yes, it's the Commodore. There's something about him, I can't explain just what it is."

Theodore said that there was undoubtedly something about the Commodore, that he knew exactly what she meant.

"In a way," she continued, rather hurriedly, "it seems to me we're in the same boat. You ran away from Farbridge—and I still think it was very silly of you—and now you're going back, though you're not sure what good it'll do."

"And are you?"

"Yes, detectives or no detectives. I've written to Mr. Hull at the White Hart, booking a room from Monday, as Mrs. Robinson like last time, but I begged him not to say anything to anybody, not even the Commodore. Oh dear! You've no idea what a relief it is to tell somebody all about it. Look—you wouldn't like to have some dinner here with me, would you? I'd be ever so glad if you would. I'll ask 'em to do their best for us. Will you?"

"I'd like to," he told her, "if you really want me to."

"Of course, I do," she cried gaily.

IT was towards the end of the meal, which was a minor triumph of the canning industry, that Grace made her astonishing request.

"Theodore, I wonder if you'd do something for me," she began, looking wistful. "It's very important to me, or I wouldn't ask it. You see, he's got some things of mine—oh!—papers, bits of jewellery, souvenirs—that I kept in one of those fancy old inlaid Eastern boxes, about so big." Apparently it was about eighteen inches long, a foot high and perhaps a foot thick. "I oughtn't to have left it behind, but I did, up at the house we had—it's really his house, not mine—in Highgate. He won't give it me, though it's mine, not his, and I won't set foot in that house, never again. Do you think you could get it for me—tonight?"

He gaped at her. "Do you mean—go and ask him for it?"

"No, he won't be in, not when you go tonight. He's coming here to see me. I've agreed to that. And I don't mind him knowing where I live this time because I'm leaving on Monday morning, going to Farbridge. He's to be here at ten. He won't be here long, of course—no fear—but it'll give you plenty of time to get the box."

"But I can't break into the house."

She laughed. "No, you don't need to do that. I wouldn't think of asking you to start burgling for me. I've still got a key. So you just walk in and take the box. First door to the right off the hall—that's where it was—in that room. You can't miss it."

"But suppose there's somebody there—a servant?"

"There won't be. He's only got a daily. All



All that's best in Britain...

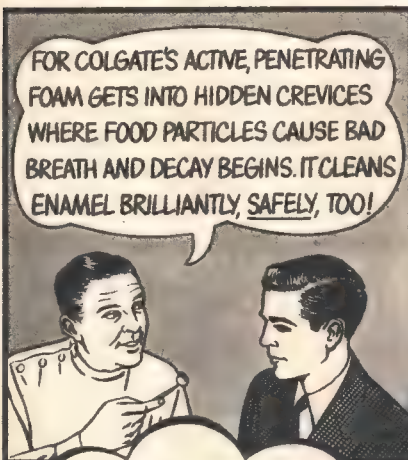
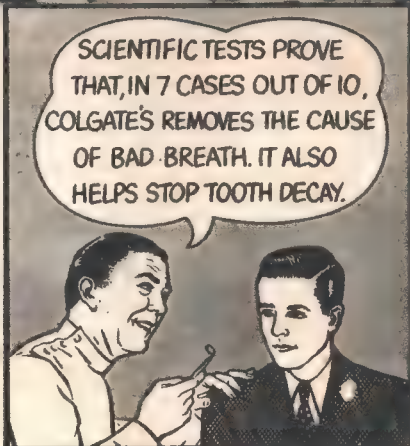
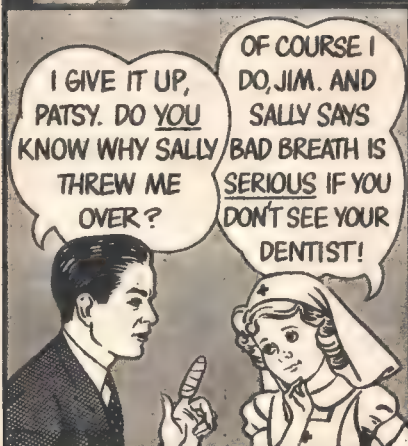
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I'm asking you to do, Theodore, is to fetch something that belongs to me. Now will you, just to please me? I might be able to do something useful for you soon—you never know—and I shan't forget. Will you?"

He would have liked to have refused, but it seemed impossible, so, rather reluctantly, he agreed.

It was just after nine when he left the flat. Following her instructions, he took a bus that took him to the bottom of West Hill. He had to walk nearly to the top of West Hill before turning down to the left, towards the Heath. The night was heavily overcast, with a low indigo ceiling of cloud. As he turned down the narrow lane, thunder was already rolling in the south-west. Not a leaf stirred; the darkness was oppressively close; and although he had not brought a raincoat, his suit was rather thick, and he found himself sweating inside it.

THE house took some finding, and it was a little after ten when, feeling like another Macbeth, he tiptoed along the short paved walk to the front door. As he hesitated a moment, the key in his hand, the thunder rolled nearer and there was a sudden glare of lightning somewhere beyond the Heath. He had time to notice that the curtains had not been drawn in the bay window of the front room, where, if Grace was right, he would find her box.

He let himself in, and hastily deciding that speed was more important than caution, he switched on the lights in the front room, darted forward and drew the curtains. It was not a large room, and was very plainly furnished, and in less than half a minute he realized that it contained nothing even remotely resembling the box that Grace had described to him. If it was still in the house, then it had been removed to another room.

At the back were a dining-room and a kitchen and a strong smell of beer and cabbage—but no box. He dashed upstairs, looked in a dusty, airless front bedroom and found nothing, then tried another bedroom, a rumpled place reeking of face powder and unwashed sheets, and was about to leave it in despair when he caught sight of the box, perched on top of a wardrobe.

As he took it down, discovering to his relief that it was not heavy, there was a crash, there was a flash, and the storm broke, with the noise of a hundred kettledrums.

With the box under his arm, he ran downstairs, only to halt in dismay just before he reached the hall. For there, standing just inside the door, with her mouth wide open, ready to scream, was a plump, middle-aged woman. As he hesitated, the scream came, high above the drumming of the rain. He saw her turn and fling open the door, to scream into the night. There was no getting out that way, so he jumped down and raced towards the back, then wasted a few precious seconds by charging headlong into a pantry.

As he recovered himself, made for the kitchen and, in the darkness there, tried to find the back door, he heard more screams, some vague cries and other disturbing sounds. He wasted more time tugging at a bolted door; and then, just as he finally unbolted it, he heard, high above the growling of the thunder, the battering of the rain, the screams and cries, the piercing, urgent note of a police whistle.

Through the rain and the dark, occasionally split by lightning

flashes, he ran and ran, still clutching the box, making blindly for the Heath. After five minutes, soaked and gasping, still hearing or seeming to hear the police whistles, he had left all the lighted windows behind, and was slipping and plunging in a black wilderness. He seemed to be hours and hours battling his way towards the lights of Hampstead, with his fine thick suit a chill pulp, his shoes squelching and cold rivulets flowing down his back. But when he finally arrived at the Belsize Park Station, looking and feeling like a man who had been pulled out of the Heath ponds, it was only about eleven o'clock.

"My goodness me!" Grace cried as she let him in. "But you're wet through. Did you have any trouble finding the box?"

"Trouble! I had almost every possible kind of trouble." And he began to explain what had happened. Then he started sneezing.

"Now look, Theodore. If you keep those clothes on another minute you'll be catching your death of cold. Get straight into that bathroom, get those clothes off and give yourself a nice long hot bath. And if you throw your clothes out, I'll take 'em straight down to the drying cupboard. No—no argument, young man, or you'll be getting pneumonia. Go on. In you go. Always plenty of hot water here, that's one thing. And take the things out of your pockets before you give me your clothes."

So he filled a bath, undressed, emptied his pockets, and dropped his soggy clothes for her to pick up and take away. As he got into the bath, he heard her say again that she would herself take his clothes down to dry as she did not trust the service, particularly at that hour. Not two minutes afterwards, as he gratefully accepted the warmth of the water and began to feel deliciously relaxed and drowsy, he heard a tapping at the bathroom door.

"Yes, Grace," he called, "what is it?"

HE had not troubled to lock the door, and now it slowly opened, to admit a long nose, a smouldering cigarette, suspicious dull eyes. He had seen this face before, but could not at that moment remember where. But if either Seth Hull or the Commodore had been there, he would have been told at once that these unprepossessing features belonged to A. Smith, London, operative of the Charing Private Enquiry Agency.

"What do you want?" Theodore yelled at the face. "Go away."

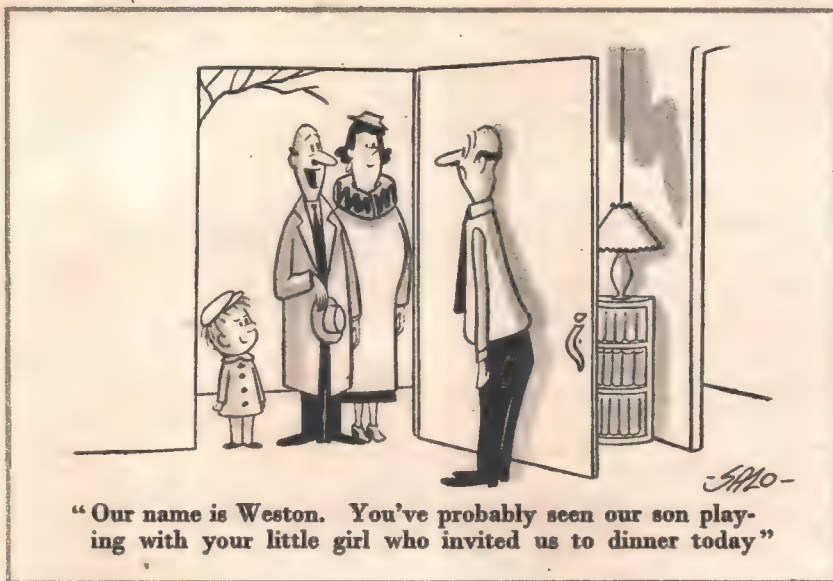
It nodded and closed one eye. "Not staying, chum. Saw a chance and popped in. Popping out now. Remember you," it continued, with another wink. "White Hart, Farbridge. Had my eye on the wrong bloke there. Just shows. Like to give the name? Just for info."

"Go away," cried Theodore, and threw a large sponge at the face.

"Now, now," it said reproachfully. "Live and let live. Get the info at Farbridge. Easy. Nice trip, too. Tata for now." And it vanished.

Theodore listened, decided that the intruder had left the flat, and completed the bath at his leisure. Quarter of an hour later, wrapped in a blanket, he was enjoying a cup of tea with Grace, who listened quite coolly to his account of the man who had looked into the bathroom.

"That must be the little man who followed me to Farbridge," she said. "Long-nosed, ratty type. That's



him. Oh—well—he doesn't matter now."

"Doesn't he? I'd have thought he did." Theodore felt rather annoyed by the cool way she was taking it all.

"No, not really. You remember I told you about the paper I signed—the one about the divorce? Well, I've got it now. It was in that box."

No doubt there was still much to be done in Farbridge on the last Sunday before the Festival opened, but the Commodore and Captain Mobbs, chief organizer and social organizer respectively, were certainly not doing it. The middle of the afternoon, a warm and windless afternoon with that extra density, that curtaining and cushioning of earth and air, which Sunday seems to bring, found them returning, in Mobbs's little car, from lunch in the pub at Brant-in-the-Hollow.

The Whatmore-Tanhead group in the local Conservative Party had been too strong for little Mobbs, and he had lost his job as the Farbridge agent. So while he was waiting to decide what he would try next, he had turned social organizer. In his new suit, a dark blue with a faint crimson stripe that set off his regimental tie very artfully, he looked much smarter than he had done when in political life. He allowed it to be thought that these changes in his appearance had been made in his capacity as social organizer.

The truth was, however, that Archie Mobbs, though fat and into his fifties, was now in love. It was Maggie, the plump, jolly daughter of the landlord of the pub at Brant-in-the-Hollow.

The Commodore dozed a little and it was not until they were turning into High Street, like a huge empty stage-set in the heavy sunlight, the muffled air of Sunday, that he struggled back to full consciousness. "You know, Archie, when I told 'em at our Corn Exchange meeting that I wanted to stay on here, I wasn't just flattering 'em. I've got fond of this place. Can't exactly say why, because there's nothing very special about it—but there it is. And if I have to clear out, I'll be sorry."

"My godfathers!—but I feel just the same," cried Mobbs, delighted by this similarity of tastes and views. "I've not had an easy time here—Bulfofs was never any great shakes, either as a candidate or a Member—and I wouldn't say I'd made many friends—and quite a few enemies—but whereas I used to like moving on, now I'd like to settle here, if I could find anything. And, as you say, old boy, there's nothing special about Farbridge. Even my digs are

only fair. But I like it here and don't want to leave."

"We must do something about it, my boy," said the Commodore solemnly, as the car drew up to the White Hart. "Coming in?"

"No, thanks. I'll run home and have a nap. Yes, old boy, we must do something about it."

The Commodore went blinking into the dusky deserted cave of the White Hart lounge. Before he noticed anybody at all, he heard a charming clear voice calling him, and then saw that it came from an alcove in which a man and a woman were taking tea. Going nearer, he recognized the woman as Philippa Hookwood, the actress.

"A-ha, Miss Hookwood," he cried, holding out a hand. "All ready for us?"

"Not quite, Commodore," she said, smiling and motioning him to a chair. "We've a long night's rehearsal in front of us. This is our leading man, Mr. Gorebarry. Patrick, this is Commodore Tribe, who's running the Festival here."

"Splendid!" said the actor, smiling. "Have some tea or something."

The Commodore, who already knew Miss Hookwood's opulent good looks, examined Patrick Gorebarry with some curiosity. Much might depend on this fellow's power of attraction. What he saw was a tallish, lean man, forty perhaps, almost gipsy dark, astonishingly handsome in the half-melancholy, half-sulky romantic style, with a personality at once reckless and weak. His voice, like the shoulders supporting the careless linen coat, was magnificently masculine, but the fingers that held his cigarette were like a girl's.

"Anybody here interested in us, do you think?" the actor asked.

"The advance isn't too hot," said Philippa.

"Too early to say what'll happen," said the Commodore, who knew little about the Theatre and cared less, but felt he had to sound as if he did. "We're doing a sort of special civic performance tomorrow night, and that ought to help. But we'll know more when you come to Sheridan and Shakespeare. You're doing this new play tomorrow, aren't you? What's it like?"

"I love it," cried Philippa. "And it plays quite well."

"So you say, darling," said Gorebarry. "And I'll take your word for it. But it seems bloody tedious to me so far."

"Wait until you have an audience, darling."

Already it was clear to the Commodore that these two darlings had



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not in fact any great liking for each other, and that they were just sitting in this corner together because they had nothing better to do.

"You very fond of the Theatre, Commodore?" said Gorebarry.

"No, not very."

"God, how right you are!"

"Pat, don't pretend," cried Philippa. "You know you adore it."

"I don't. Never did really," he said moodily. "Can't decide which I detest more, film studios or theatres. A plague o' both your houses!" He slouched out abruptly.

Philippa sighed. "What he'll do to some of these women here these next two weeks, you can't begin to imagine. That is, if he keeps moderately sober. You know about him, of course? Yes, well, it's a frantic risk but so far—touch wood—we've had no trouble. It's one reason Archie Mossat took your young friend on, to help him to look after poor Pat."

"What young friend?"

She stared at him, surprised by his question. "Why, didn't you know? The boy who was helping you here at first—Theodore."

"Theodore Jenks?"

"Yes, of course. And another fatal charmer, only—thank God—unlike Pat Gorebarry he doesn't know it yet. All the girls in the company adore him, but Clare, who's very quick and artful, grabbed him first."

The Commodore was thinking hard. "Where's Theodore now?"

"At the theatre, of course. He's one of our assistant stage managers, among other things. What's the matter?"

"I remember this Clare—she came here with you—a very attractive wench—"

"Yes, if you happen to like that type. Coarse, dark hair, thick white skin, short-legged and busty. But a sweet girl—of course."

"How far has this gone?"

"What—between Theodore and Clare? My dear, don't ask me, but at a guess, knowing Clare, I'd say as far as it could go."

"But no engagement, no talk of marriage?" the Commodore persisted.

"Not that I've heard of. But why all this curiosity?"

"My assistant on this Festival job is a girl called Laura Casey, who's very hard-working and dependable—and a delightful child—but who's been in a queer state ever since she and Theodore, who seemed to be in raptures about each other, had a quarrel."

"Oh, that's why he left you, is it, Commodore? I'm so glad you joined us here. I love this sort of cosy talk about people one knows. Don't you?"

"No, not much. But I think that's chiefly why he left us." He waited a moment. "You see, young Laura has another admirer here, a journalist called Michael Seacombe—"

"Oh, he came to see us in town, for some publicity stuff. He's rather attractive, isn't he? But go on. I like this."

"Well, the point is," said the Commodore carefully, "if both Laura and Theodore are sufficiently attached elsewhere, then all's well. Or if they suddenly forgot about their Clares and Michaels and fell into each other's arms—which isn't likely, I'm afraid—all would be well, too. But if, which is most likely, they're both in some messy state of mind in between these two happy extremes, and they're running round this town worrying about each other, then poor little Laura might go and break down

altogether and I'll be left with this Festival entirely on my own hands."

"I don't believe in this breaking down business," Philippa said. "Girls are much tougher than that, and if there's a lot of emotion roaring round, exciting young men coming back, quarrels and reconciliations and whatnot all over the place, then, my dear man, they simply thrive on it. Yes, I know. When he left, she was suddenly miserable and edgy. That was because everything suddenly went dull, lifeless. I know. I've had some."

"You may be different," he objected.

"Nonsense. I'm just about average. Look. If she's still in love with him—and I'll bet she is—then she'll do no breaking down just because he's around again. No fear. If she's fallen out of love with him—and decides to take What's-his-name—Michael—then she'll keep going just to show Theodore what a fool he was to run away and how little she cares now. And either way she'll be bossing the Festival like mad, just to show off. I know I would."

"I'm afraid I don't agree," said the Commodore, who would have saved himself and others a lot of trouble afterwards if he had agreed.

LATER that same Sunday night, the Commodore and Captain Mobbs went, dutifully but reluctantly, to the large house in which Huntley, the Chief Education Officer, had rooms—to attend a reading of his own poems by Rufus Grope, one of the Festival lecturers.

There seemed to be about thirty people there, with many earnest schoolmistresses sitting on the floor; and Mr. Grope, who was standing with his back to the fireplace, was reading aloud. He was a man about forty-five with patchy grey hair, a jaundiced complexion, and sepia-shadowed pouches under his eyes. He had a curious voice, sad and hollow and yet booming, that suggested a giant calling to be let out of a zinc box.

"This next poem," he announced, looking at Mobbs, "is called *Menippus On Half-day Closing*—"

"Called what, old boy?" cried

NOW YOU KNOW



CHANCES of being struck by lightning are one in two million. But why take risks? Safest place is indoors. If you are very cautious keep in the centre of a room and avoid fireplaces, electric switches and water pipes.

Outside, avoid wire and metal fences. Don't shelter under trees; if you *must*, then stand away from the trunks. Shun exposed hill-tops, open fields and beaches, but if you are caught in the open make for a ditch or cave. If there's no shelter, lie on the ground.

Mobbs, baffled, but anxious to show some interest.

"Called *Menippus on Half-day Closing*. It's rather gay, I think."

"Good," said Mobbs. There was a slight stir among the listeners, and a hastily suppressed giggle that sounded like Miss Laura Casey.

Grope scowled, then boomed hollowly:

"Utter mendacities
Are almost suppressed,
Except in the case of the girl with
too many shoes.

All the vanilla avenues,
With blood on the blinds,
Are closed
To centaurs
And leading technicians in small
bicycle factories.

When shall we meet
Flamingoes in the maze?"

There was a murmur of wonder and admiration as the poet slowly lowered his book and closed his eyes.

"I didn't quite get it, old boy," Mobbs muttered to the Commodore.

"You didn't, Archie?" said the Commodore. "You've neglected your literary tastes, I'm afraid, my boy. This kind of evening is wasted on you." He turned to Laura, who was now at his elbow. "I want to talk to Seacombe for a few minutes. Festival business, but you needn't bother about it. Is there another room where he and I could talk?"

"I think there's a little dining-room across the hall," said Laura. "I'll tell him to join you there. Sure you don't want me?"

"Positive, my dear," said the Commodore, who was.

LEFT to himself in the dining-room, he glanced round and noticed, on the sideboard and in the shadow of a soda siphon, a coy half-bottle of whisky. He was helping himself rather hurriedly when Seacombe came in.

"Did you want to see me about something?"

"Yes. Won't take a minute. Young Jenks is back—with the Mossat Company at the Palace."

"I know he is," said Michael, "though I haven't told Laura."

"That's the point. I've been worried about little Laura. Doesn't matter to me which of you she falls in love with or gets herself engaged to. It would if I disliked one of you, but then I don't."

"I can see that," said Michael. "But what you don't want is an unhappy Laura, who doesn't know where she is. That's it, isn't it?"

"It is," said the Commodore. "So what I suggest—and this is why I wanted to have a word with you—is that if you feel you're making any headway with her, then you'd better rush her into an engagement at once. If you could work it, we might even announce it at the Civic Lunch tomorrow."

"The idea had occurred to me," said Michael thoughtfully. "I'd also wondered whether it wouldn't be rather a dirty trick."

"It would if you were rushing her into immediate marriage," said the Commodore. "But, after all, it's only an engagement."

"Then what's the point of the move then?" Michael demanded shrewdly. "Either we're rushing her or we're not."

"I'm not rushing her. I'm merely trying to keep her busy and happy during these next two weeks." The Commodore was not quite as easy and confident as he sounded.

"Well, I'll see how it goes," said Michael doubtfully.

To be continued next week



STRANGLEHOLD

Continued from page 8

sure you wouldn't like a doctor?"

"No, thanks."

"I have my responsibilities, too!"

She shook her head. With a politeness she thought unnatural, he added: "You may like to see the evening paper."

She thanked him again and accepted the two cases, and he withdrew. Why had he brought her the paper? The caretaker had died, having made a brief statement to the waiting detective. The police thought they knew the identity of the criminals.

As she crossed the room, she caught sight of her face in the mirror and realized her exhaustion. Boxer was asleep and breathing quickly. He was developing a temperature. Quietly she shed her frock and slipped in beside him, thinking: After all, this is my wedding night. In a moment, she was asleep.

A long time later, she woke to a subdued knocking at the door and was surprised to find the sun streaming between the curtains. The waitress offered her a tray of tea, toast and marmalade.

"Mr. Bannister says to tell you," she smirked, "that he hopes your husband is better, and that the room will be needed, if that is convenient."

Maisie replied firmly: "My husband is much better, thank you, but he needs at least another forty-eight hours' rest. I hope Mr. Bannister will be able to arrange for us to stay."

Boxer was feverish, his forehead damp with sweat, and his wound, when she had uncovered it, flushed and angry. She had to go out that Sunday morning to buy dressings and antiseptics. Meanwhile, she washed him down and fed him, spoonful by spoonful, with a mush of toast and tea.

He was obsessed with the fear that the Boys would ultimately "get him." Although she protested, he cried: "Rozzi must have known I was quitting. That's why he put the raid off. The wedding was a fool idea. He'll plant something on me. He's waiting for news of my corpse, and when he doesn't get it, he'll start looking..."

He fell quiet at last and returned to his stupor. She slipped downstairs and through the foyer without meeting anyone.

When she returned from the chemist's, Mr. Bannister was waiting for her. "Good morning," he said.

"Good morning."

"I'm glad your husband's better."

He hesitated, then pushed out the register. "I forgot to ask you to sign."

She signed her married name. His right hand was resting on the desk. Then he took it away, disclosing the

lid of a small cardboard box with metal edges. The label bore the address of a wholesale jeweller's in the City. He said hurriedly, with an edge on his voice: "I found it in the back of your car."

She knew that Rozzi must have thrown it there. It was the "plant" Boxer had feared. She said: "I know nothing about it."

His voice trembled. "Funny, that! You forget I've got a master key."

Her disgust mingled with surprise at discovering that he was frightened and forcing himself to blackmail her. "You've been searching my room!"

He nodded. Gripping the desk, he said rapidly: "It's expensive keeping him here—dangerous, too." He made himself face her, but met her scorn and lowered his eyes.

She asked: "What do you want?" "£100 a night. It's little enough—"

"Very well."

She turned and ran up both flights of stairs to work off her fury. She did not tell Boxer of the development, and he was too busy with his own terrors to worry about hers.

Somehow she got through the day, but her night was sleepless. Every hour added to the burden of her fears. Boxer was restless and groaned as he wrenched his shoulder, so that she wrapped an arm round him to keep him still. Her dreams were haunted by a terrified Mr. Bannister.

In the morning, Boxer seemed stronger. She felt that she could not endure another day and night in the place, whatever his condition. Nor was Mr. Bannister to be trusted. She would leave the car, take Boxer home by taxi. Even her parents would be preferable to Mr. Bannister. About ten o'clock, she descended the stairs. Mr. Bannister was waiting for her. She told him simply: "I shall be back in half an hour. I am taking him away."

Mr. Bannister licked his lips.

SHE went by Underground to her bank near Marble Arch and drew out £250, then bought a jacket, a sports shirt and a riding mack, and a cheap suitcase to put them in. Within forty minutes, she was back again by taxi. She had slammed the taxi door and run to the top of the steps when she glanced round and saw, looking up at her, the thin dark face of the man who had stabbed Boxer.

She vanished inside the Brooklyn, trembling with terror. Mr. Bannister came out from his office to meet her. She gripped his arm. "The police!" she said. "I must phone the police." He thrust her into the office. "What's all this?"

"That man out there. It was he who stabbed my husband. Give me the telephone—!"

He stammered: "The police? They mustn't come here. What

man? Show me." When she had led him to the window, the Cyprian had disappeared. "There you are, it's a trick."

Her brain became ice-cold. She said: "Here's all the money I have. I am going to phone my father." He made no objection as she picked up the receiver, but began to count the notes. Then the pitch of her voice alarmed him. "Father! Is that you? Father, fetch me; it's terribly urgent. Send the car—the car, do you understand? Brooklyn Hotel, off King's Road. Father, quickly—it's Rozzi!"

She banged the receiver down and fled. When Mr. Bannister started after her, he saw the Cyprian swiftly following her upstairs, while two youths carrying guns were coming towards him from either side.

Maisie barely had time to slam the door behind her and bolt it, before it shuddered under a blow from outside. She began to pile flimsy bits of furniture against the door. All her efforts were useless. The door burst open, sweeping the furniture aside, and she found herself facing Rozzi.

HE said: "Over there, please," and motioned her to cross the room to Boxer's bed-head. His voice was pleasant and controlled. Boxer had half-risen from his bed, clutching his breast. She could only play for time, and flung herself upon him to protect him.

She felt a hand on her shoulder gently pulling her away and heard Rozzi say: "Lady, believe me, he's not worth it. He's just yellow. Aren't you, Boxer?"

Boxer himself shrugged her off. He began to cry: "Roz—Roz—don't do it! I didn't want her. She forced this on me. You know she's a copper's daughter. She'll be the one to talk. I'll come with you. Get rid of her, Roz..."

This was the crisis, not so much of the affair as of Maisie's life. She was a girl in love, or a girl who had been in love. Now her arms loosed their stranglehold round Boxer's neck as she heard Rozzi say: "I told you, lady, he's just not worth it."

She collapsed on the floor as Rozzi leaned over her. Boxer groaned once. She was past caring. Some sort of rumpus broke out downstairs that made Rozzi flee for the door...

We got him, all right. Boxer had taken the knife in his heart. Maisie—well, Maisie's another matter.

* * *

Jenkinson rose as footsteps sounded near the cabin, and a girl stooped under the opening that served as a doorway. Two or three primroses were tucked into her blouse. She was boyish-looking and attractive, except that her face lacked all expression. When she saw me, she cast down her eyes, like a nun. She said: "I've brought your mack, Father."

When Jenkinson introduced us, she scarcely gave me a smile.

But when she had gone, Jenkinson said mildly: "It must be the spring. She's wearing a buttonhole and she's taken off that damned wedding-ring at last." He lit his abominable pipe and glanced outside. "It's stopped raining. Come on, let's get those seed-beds dug."

He sounded, it seemed to me, almost jubilant.

THE END

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I WAS A SOLDIER-SPY

Continued from page 11

lain down with our clothes soaked through and risen in the morning so stiff that we could scarcely move our limbs. For six weeks without a pause an enraged enemy—mainly the 13th S.S. Division—had tried to run us down and kill us. "Now it's our turn," Kolya said that day.

My plan was fairly simple. I had left the rest of my party, Sergeant Brandreth with his wireless transmitter, and a stout-hearted Yugoslav called Steve Serdar, in the hills. Getting across the plains would be too hazardous to risk our wireless set. Meanwhile, I had arranged for another wireless set to be sent to the little Partisan group in the Fruska Gora. My idea was to communicate with base by means of this "Partisan transmitter." Much of my work, I knew, would be fruitless marching back and forth, "showing the flag," arranging for supplies by air (to signals got through by wireless).

In these limitless plains the Germans had sworn that the Partisans would never be able to survive. Yet the Partisans did survive. And not only that—they jabbed the enemy night after night in places that hurt him sorely. Not a week went by but little groups of Partisans crept through the darkness to the great trunk-railway which runs across the plain and which carried German troops and war material back and forth to Greece and Bulgaria. These Partisan sappers had become adept at laying mines. Trucks and engines went up in dozens and in scores all through these months, scarring the night sky with blazing splinters.

Massacred By Nazis

Maddened by these attacks, the Germans sent against us punitive columns that ranged across the wide plains. But the Partisans had eyes and ears everywhere. It was said that a German soldier could not so much as walk out of his billet to go to the lavatory but some peasant ran and told the Partisans.

Since they could seldom catch the Partisans, the Germans turned in their rage upon the old men and women and the children who were left in the villages.

That is what they did at the little woodland village of Racha, which Kolya and I passed through on our long journey to the Danube. As we entered the village we were greeted by Lala, the local Partisan commander. He was boiling with anger, and swearing dangerously as he described how the Germans had massacred the village during their offensive of the previous month.

We walked round the silent village; and we saw for ourselves. In a large cottage which the Germans had apparently used as company headquarters, we came upon an old man who had somehow survived. We couldn't get much sense out of him, for they'd driven him a little off his head. But he took us into the garden of his cottage and pointed to the place where he had found his wife with a hatchet gash in the back of her skull.

A little farther on we entered a room where a mother and baby had been killed in bed. In a wrecked front garden we found a heap of ashes. I remember that Lala fished out a baby's shoe, and then the flat disc-part of a very young skull and a few other bones that were recognizable as human.

What struck me forcibly was that the survivors nursed no grudge

against the Partisans for having brought such terrible reprisals upon their village. "It's our army," the peasants used to say of the Partisans. "How should we blame our own army, our own sons? Aren't they fighting to liberate our country?"

That night we held a council with the village committee. "People are nervous," the chairman said. "They're afraid that the Nazis will come back and finish them off. They want our army to stop that."

Kolya said: "We understand, chairman. And you can tell the village that two companies are already on their way back to this area. If there should be another threat like this we will give everyone ample warning to clear out and hide in the woods until the danger's past."

Bulging Money Belt

Early next morning we set out again on our long ride towards the plains. Before going far we stopped at the village of Grk. It was in Grk that I left my gold and dollars. Making the elementary mistake of thinking that the Partisans would want to be paid for their services, Base had given me 200 gold sovereigns and several thousand dollar bills. These I had worn around my waist in a bulging money belt, until the sheer weight of it all had become a frantic nuisance.

So I had said to Kolya: "Look here, I've got all this money. Can't you store it for me?"

Kolya was amazed. "Whatever did they think you were going to do with it?" he laughed. "Buy us up or something?" But he overlooked the insult and arranged for the money to be left with peasant friends in Grk. And this little story, I suppose, tells more about the truth of the Partisan movement than any other I know, for the money stayed in Grk for many months. During these months the Germans were in and out of the village at least three times. Nothing would have been easier for the peasants who had my gold than to say that the Germans had taken it. But they didn't; and later that year they gave it back to me to the last dollar bill.

My sixteen months with the Partisans cost His Majesty's Treasury one gold sovereign (which I lost myself) and a few hundred dollars. I can still remember the look of amazement on the face of our admin. officer at Base when I gave it all back to him at the end of 1944.

NEXT WEEK: I play hide-and-seek with the enemy and steal across the Danube

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Leisure, of course, is a necessity, but don't confuse rest with idleness. You can sit and think or you can just sit. Just sitting nearly always ends in brooding and misery. If you're well, a change of occupation will give you all the "rest" you need.

by **ROFFE THOMPSON**



He felt
"finished"
at forty

Really, John, you're too bad. Night after night, I go to the trouble of cooking you a proper meal and...

I know, I know... I don't eat it. Well, I'm sorry, dear, I don't feel like eating—that's all there is to it. I'm too tired. I'm getting old.

Oh, nonsense, you're only just forty. And anyway, if you're tired you need food.

Well, let's not argue about it. I'm too tired for arguing, too.



... simply exasperates me, Mrs. Canning. He says he's too tired to eat when he gets home.

But, poor man, I expect he is. Life is a ghastly strain for men of his position. Just think of the worries he must have at the office—not to mention the work. Worries and tiredness have a direct effect on the digestion, you know;

Well, but he still needs food.

Of course he does, but not a substantial meal the second he comes into the house. Now,

what I'd suggest is a routine our doctor recommended for my husband. Persuade John to rest, relax completely, for about half-an-hour before his dinner each evening, and while he's resting, give him half a bottle of Brand's Essence.

Why, what's so wonderful about Brand's Essence?

Well, what our doctor said was this: When a person—even a healthy person—gets very tired, his whole body slows up. Digestive juices, too. He doesn't feel hungry. He can't digest properly. He eats less and less and so gets overtired because he's undernourished. It's a vicious circle. But Brand's gives appetite again... That's why doctors recommend it for invalids.



FOUR DAYS LATER

What a day! This rush hour journey! Got any Brand's for me, dear?

Of course. I am glad you like it, John. I'd never have believed it would make such a difference to you so soon. Here you are!

Ah-h-h! What good stuff this is! I feel better for it already. What's for dinner? I must say, I do really look forward to my meals now!

... so now, although he's quite back to his old youthful form, I still give him Brand's Essence whenever he's extra tired or strained—and often take it myself, too. It's a meat protein with a delicious flavour. It doesn't contain fats, so there's no trouble about digesting it.

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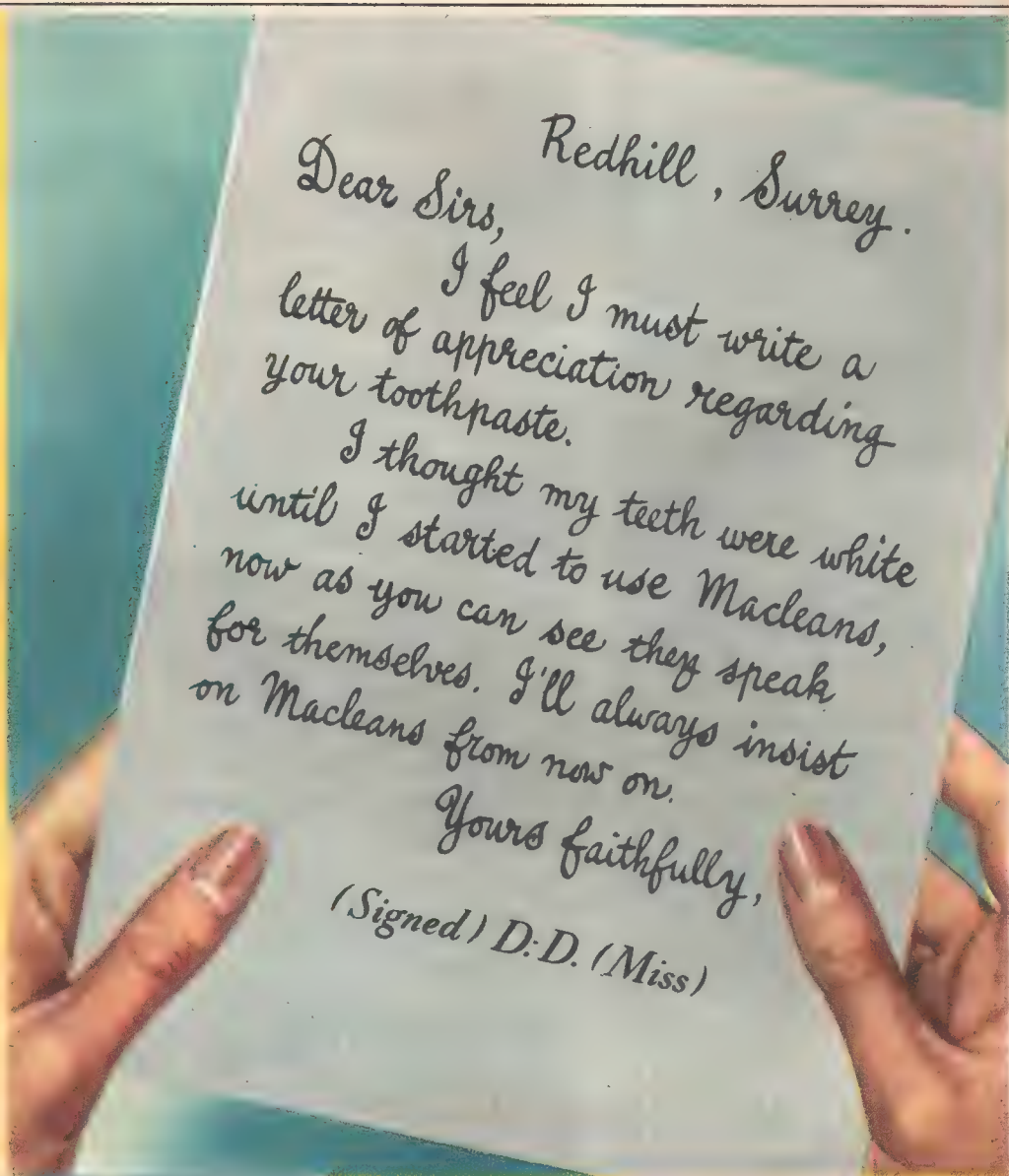
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WHITER

LITTLE TEMBI

Continued from page 14

nursery. "You must learn to read, Tembi," she would say. "Then, when you want to get a job, you will earn more wages if you can take messages on the telephone, and write down orders so that you don't forget them."

"Yes, missus," Tembi would say, reverently taking the books from her. When she left the garden, she would glance back, always a little uncomfortably, because of Tembi's intense devotion, and see him kneeling on the rich, red soil, framed by the bright green of the vegetables, knitting his brows over the strange coloured pictures and the unfamiliar print.

This went on for about two years. She said to Willie: "Tembi seems to have got over that funny business of his. He's really useful in that garden. I don't have to tell him when to plant things. He knows as well as I do. And he goes round the huts in the compound with the vegetables, persuading the natives to eat them."

HE was nearly eleven when he began giving trouble again. Jane sent her two older children to boarding school, dismissed her nannies and decided to engage a piccanin to help with the younger children's washing. She did not think of Tembi, but engaged his younger brother.

Tembi presented himself at the back door, as of old, eyes flashing, body held fine and taut, to protest.

"Missus, missus, you promised I should work for you."

"But, Tembi, you are working for me, with the vegetables."

"Missus, my missus, you said when you took a piccanin for the house, that piccanin would be me."

But Jane did not give way. She still felt as if Tembi were on probation. And that demanding, insistent, impatient thing in Tembi did not seem to her a good quality to be near her children. Besides, she liked Tembi's little brother, who was a softer, smiling, chubby Tembi, playing good-naturedly with the children in the garden when he had finished the washing and ironing. She saw no reason to change, and said so.

Tembi sulked. He no longer took baskets of green stuff from door to door in the compound. And he did as little work as he need without actually neglecting it. The spirit had gone out of him.

"You know," said Jane, half indignantly, half amused, to Willie: "Tembi behaves as if he had some sort of claim on us."

Quite soon, Tembi came to Willie and asked to be allowed to buy a bicycle. He was then earning ten shillings a month, and the rule was that no native earning less than fifteen shillings could buy a bicycle. A fifteen-shilling native would keep five shillings of his wages, give ten to Willie, and undertake to remain on the farm till the debt was paid.

"No," said Willie. "And what does a piccanin like you want with a bicycle? A bicycle is for big men."

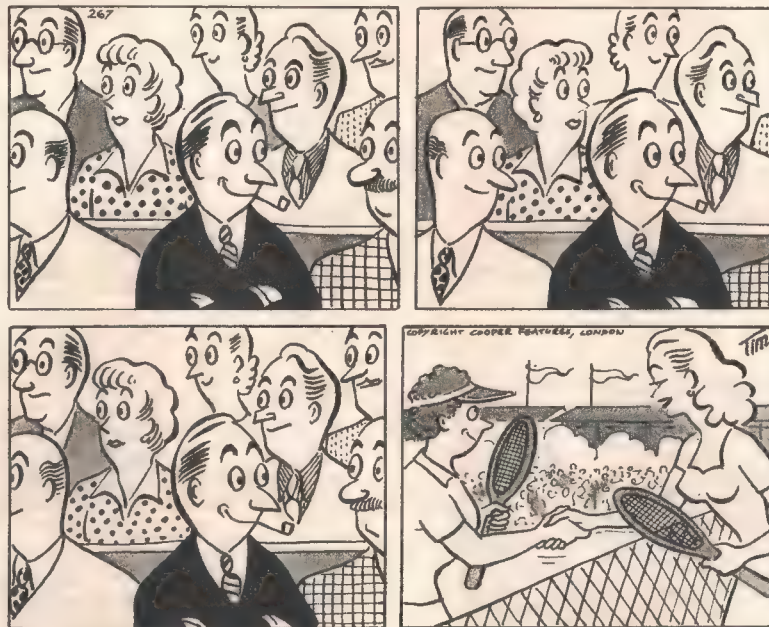
Next day, their eldest child's bicycle vanished from the house, and was found in the compound leaning against Tembi's hut. Tembi had not even troubled to conceal the theft; and, when he was called for an interview, kept silent. At last he said: "I don't know why I stole it. I don't know." And he ran off, crying, into the trees.

"He must go," said Willie, finally, baffled and angry.

"But his father and mother and

OH, JOHNNY!

by TIM



the family live in our compound," protested Jane.

"I'm not having a thief on the farm," said Willie.

But getting rid of Tembi was more than dismissing a thief: it was pushing aside a problem that the McClusters were not equipped to handle. Suddenly Jane knew that when she no longer saw Tembi's burning, pleading eyes it would be a relief; though she said guiltily: "Well, I suppose he can find work on one of the farms nearby."

Tembi did not allow himself to be sacked so easily. When Willie told him he burst into passionate tears, like a very small child. Then he ran round the house and banged his fists on the kitchen door till Jane came out. "Missus, my missus, don't let the boss send me away."

"But Tembi, you must go, if the boss says so."

"I work for you, missus; I'm your boy. Let me stay. I'll work for you in the garden and I won't ask for any more money."

"I'm sorry, Tembi," said Jane. Tembi gazed at her while his face hollowed into incredulous misery; he had not believed she would not take his part. At this moment his little brother came round the corner of the house, carrying Jane's youngest child, and Tembi flew across and flung himself on them, so that the little black child staggered back, clutching the baby.

Jane flew to rescue her baby, and then pulled Tembi off his brother, who was bitten and scratched all over his face and arms. "That finishes it," she said coldly. "You will be off this farm in an hour, or the police will chase you off."

THEY asked Tembi's father, later, if the lad had found work; the reply was that he was garden boy on a neighbouring farm. When the McClusters saw these neighbours they asked after Tembi, but the reply was vague: on this new farm Tembi was just another labourer without a history.

Later still, Tembi's father said there had been "trouble," and that Tembi had moved to another farm, many miles away. Then, no one seemed to know where he was. It was said he had joined a gang of boys moving south to Johannesburg for work in the gold mines.

The McClusters forgot Tembi. They were pleased to be able to forget him. They thought of themselves as good masters; they had a

good name with their labourers for kindness and fair dealing; while the affair of Tembi left something hard and unassimilable in them, like a grain of sand in a mouthful of food.

It was about four years later that the robberies began again. The McCluster's house was the first to be rifled. Someone climbed in one night and took Willie's big winter coat, his stick, two old dresses belonging to Jane, a quantity of children's clothing and an old and battered child's tricycle. Money left lying in a drawer was untouched.

Because of this, the first theft was not connected with the second, which took place at a neighbouring farmhouse. There, money and watches and a gun were stolen. And there were more thefts of the same kind in the district. The police decided it must be a gang of thieves, not the ordinary pilferer, for the robberies were so clever and it seemed as if several people had planned them. Watchdogs were poisoned; times were chosen when servants were out of the house; and on two occasions someone had entered through bars so closely set together that no one but a child could have forced its way through.

The district gossiped about the robberies; and because of them the anger lying dormant between white and black, always ready to flare up, deepened in an ugly way. There was hatred in the white peoples' voices when they addressed their servants; that futile anger, for even if their personal servants were giving information to the thieves, what could be done about it?

As the thefts continued, Willie put bars in all the windows of the house and bought two large, fierce dogs. This annoyed Jane, for it made her feel confined and a prisoner in her own home.

However, it was not more than three weeks after they were bought that the dogs were found lying stretched in the sun, quite dead, foam at their mouths and their eyes glazing. They had been poisoned.

"It looks as if we can expect another visit," Willie said quietly.

Not long after the dogs were poisoned, it became necessary for Willie to make the trip into town, thirty miles off. Jane did not want to go; she disliked the long, hot, scurrying day in the streets. So Willie went by himself.

In the morning, Jane staked out some new beds in the vegetable garden, and then sewed on the

veranda. Leaving her chair for a moment, to fetch a glass of water, she found her sewing basket had gone. At first she could not believe it. She searched the place, for she knew very well it had been on the veranda not a few moments before. It meant that a native was lingering in the bush, perhaps a hundred yards away, watching her movements. It wasn't a pleasant thought. An old uneasiness filled her; and again the name "Tembi" rose into her mind.

"But why a sewing basket?" muttered Jane to herself, incredulously. "Why take such a risk for so little? It's insane."

That afternoon, when the children were playing in the garden, and Jane was asleep on her bed, someone walked quietly into the bedroom and took her big garden hat, her apron, and the dress she had been wearing that morning. When Jane woke and discovered this, she began to tremble, half with anger, half with fear. She was alone in the house; and she had the prickly feeling of being watched. As she moved from room to room, she kept glancing over her shoulders behind the angles of wardrobe and cupboard, and fancied that Tembi's great imploring eyes would appear there, as unappeasable as a dead person's eyes, following her.

She found herself watching the road for Willie's return. If Willie had been there, she could have put the responsibility on to him and felt safe: Jane was a woman who depended very much on that invisible support a husband gives.

IT was a long, warm and sunny afternoon, and the waiting preyed on her. She could not prevent her eyes from returning again and again to the bush immediately in front of the house, which stretched for mile on mile, a low dark, scrubby green, darker because of the lengthening shadows of approaching evening.

An impulse pulled her to her feet, and she marched towards the bush through the garden. At its edge she stopped, peering everywhere for those dark and urgent eyes, and called "Tembi, Tembi." There was no sound.

"I won't punish you, Tembi," she implored. "Come here, to me." She waited, listening delicately, for the slightest movement of branch or dislodged pebble. But the bush was silent under the sun; even the birds were drugged by the heat; and the leaves hung without trembling.

"Tembi!" she called out again; at first peremptorily, and then with a quaver in her voice. She knew very well that he was there, flattening himself behind some tree or bush, waiting for her to say the right word, to find the right things to say, so that he could trust her. It maddened her to think he was so close, and she could no more reach him than she could lay hands on a shadow.

Lowering her voice persuasively she said: "Tembi, I know you are there. Come here and talk to me. I won't tell the police. Can't you trust me, Tembi?"

Not a sound, not a whisper of a reply. She tried to make her mind soft and blank, so that the words she needed would appear there, ready for using. The grass was beginning to shake a little in the evening breeze, and the hanging leaves tremored once or twice; there was a warm mellowing of the light that meant the sun would soon sink; a red glow showed on the foliage, and the sky was flaring high with light. Jane was trembling so that she could not

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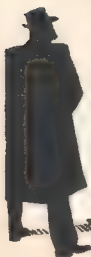
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control her limbs. She tried to steady herself. This was silly. She couldn't be afraid of little Tembi! How could she be?

She made her voice firm and loud and said: "Tembi, you are being very foolish. What's the use of stealing things like a stupid child? You can be clever about stealing for a little while, but sooner or later the police will catch you and you will go to prison. You don't want that, do you? Listen to me, now. You come out now and let me see you; and when the boss comes I'll explain to him, and I'll say you are sorry, and you can come back and work for me in the vegetable garden. I don't like to think of you as a thief, Tembi. Thieves are bad people."

She stopped. The silence settled around her. She knew Tembi would not come out to her now. She had not found the right things to say. "You are a silly little boy," she announced to the still listening bush. "You make me very angry, Tembi." And she walked very slowly back to the house, holding herself calm and dignified, knowing that Tembi was watching her, with some plan in his mind she could not conjecture.

WHEN Willie returned from town, tired and irritable as he always was after a day of traffic, and interviewing people, and shopping, she told him carefully, choosing her words, what had happened. When she told him how she had called to Tembi from the verge of the bush, Willie looked gently at her, and said: "My dear, what good do you think that's going to do?"

"But Willie, it's all so awful. . . ." Her lips began to tremble luxuriously and she allowed herself to weep comfortably on his shoulder.

"You don't know it is Tembi," said Willie.

"Of course it's Tembi. Who else could it be? The silly little boy. My silly little Tembi. . . ."

She could not eat. After supper she said suddenly: "He'll come here tonight. I'm sure of it. If he'd only let me talk to him."

"Talk to him!" said Willie. "Like hell! I'll have him in prison. That's the only place for him."

It was then not eight o'clock. "I'll have my gun beside the bed," planned Willie. "He stole a gun, didn't he, from the farm over the river? He might be dangerous." Willie's blue eyes were alight; he was walking up and down the room, his hands in his pockets, alert and excited: he seemed to be enjoying the idea of capturing Tembi, and because of this Jane felt herself go cold against him.

It was at this moment that there was a sound from the bedroom next door. They sprang up, and reached the entrance together. There stood Tembi, facing them, his hands dangling empty at his sides. He had grown taller, but still seemed the same lithe, narrow child, with the thin face and great eloquent eyes. At the sight of those eyes Jane said weakly: "Willie. . . ."

Willie, however, marched across to Tembi, and took that unresisting criminal by the arm. "You young rascal," he said angrily, but in a voice appropriate, not to a dangerous thief, who had robbed many houses, but rather to a naughty child caught pilfering fruit. Tembi did not reply to Willie: his eyes were fixed on Jane. He was trembling.

"Why didn't you come when I called you?" asked Jane. "You are so foolish, Tembi."

"I was afraid, missus," said



"It's going to make the bathroom awfully dull. . ."

Tembi, in a voice just above a whisper.

"But I said I wouldn't tell the police," said Jane.

"Be quiet, Jane," ordered Willie. "Of course we're calling the police. What are you thinking of?" As if feeling the need to remind himself of this important fact, he said: "After all, the lad's a criminal."

"I'm not a bad boy," whispered Tembi imploringly to Jane. "Missus, my missus, I'm not a bad boy."

But the thing was out of Jane's hands. Willie seemed uncertain what to do. Finally he strode purposefully to the wardrobe, and took his rifle from it, and handed it to Jane. "You stay here," he ordered. "I'm calling the police on the telephone." He went out, leaving the door open, while Jane stood there holding the big gun, and waiting for the sound of the telephone.

She looked helplessly down at the rifle, set it against the bed, and said in a whisper: "Tembi, why did you steal?"

Tembi hung his head and said: "I don't know, missus."

"But you must know."

There was no reply. The tears poured down Tembi's cheeks.

"Tembi, did you like Johannesburg?" There was no reply. "How long were you there?"

"Three years, missus."

"Why did you come back?"

"They put me in prison, missus."

"What for?"

"I didn't have a pass."

"Did you get out of prison?"

"No, I was there one month and they let me go."

"Was it you who stole all the things from the houses around here?"

TEMBI nodded, his eyes cast down to the floor. Jane did not know what to do. She repeated firmly to herself: "This is a dangerous boy, who is quite unscrupulous and very clever," and picked up the rifle again. But the weight of it, a cold hostile thing, made her feel sorry. She set it down sharply. "Look at me, Tembi," she whispered.

Outside, in the passage, Willie was saying in a firm, confident voice: "Yes, Sergeant, we've got him here. He used to work for us, years ago. Yes."

"Look, Tembi," whispered Jane quickly, "I'm going out of the room. You must run away quickly. How did you get in?" This thought came to her for the first time. Tembi looked at the window. Jane could see how the bars had been forced apart, so that a very slight person could squeeze in, sideways. "You must be strong," she said. "Now, there isn't any need to go out that



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Whole Roast Chicken and 2 lb. delicious Ham (both tinned) accompany each of the 20 chief prizes won with *Bullet* which was one of four or more on single coupon or plain-paper entry sheet.

RULES

1. First Prize for best *Bullet* received. Others in order of merit—the test is of cleverness, aptness and originality.
2. Editor undertakes that all *Bullets* received shall be accorded careful consideration by competent Adjudicators.
3. As entry-fee, enclose P.O. or stamps as indicated on coupon. Fee submitted will be taken to cover *Bullets* in coupon order—any sent in excess will be disqualified. Plain-paper entries are allowed. If using P.O. make payable to JOHN BULL, cross / & Co., write name and address on back. Coupons must not be mutilated. Forces half-rate for *Bullets* and Crosswords for entry-fee not exceeding 2s. If coupons personally completed and Service rank indicated.
4. Entries accepted by post only and on condition that results of this week's Contests in *Bulletin* and *Gazette*, dated June 23, and in JOHN BULL, dated June 30, also Editor's decision in any matter of dispute, are accepted as final and legally binding. Odhams' employees (and families) ineligible.

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Britain with the other chief cheques. Get busy with some good *Bullets* for your coupon below and you may soon be joining a JOHN BULL Holiday Party at Lugano or Torquay!

Add 2, 3 or 4 Words to any of these "EXAMPLES"

To make a *Bullet*, add simply TWO, THREE or FOUR words of apt and original comment to any of the *Examples* below. To use an incomplete *Example*, first complete it with any one word in place of dotted line—then make your *Bullet* as usual.

Britain's Story
Festival Of Summer
When We Get There
International Chess
Solemnly
Parenthood's Wonderful, But
Fighting Fit
The Next Man In
Some Day, Somewhere
Official Secret
One Long Holiday
Glamour Girl
Floundering
Amidst The Wreckage
The Whip
Auntie's Doctor
Devil's Own Job
Like A Thunderbolt
Soap And Water
Under The Hammer

Incomplete "Examples" —see instructions

Hurrah For And
..... Of The Century
Struggling To
With His Trusty
To Catch The Way
Down Way

NOTE.—You may enclose *Bullets* and Xword entries in same envelope covered by single P.O. for combined entry-fee. Mark envelope "Combined," top left-hand corner.

POST ENTRY

"Bullets" 1,785 (or Xword 737) "John Bull," Long Acre, London, W.C.2 (Comp.)



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£10 plus Seaside Holiday for Two: J. L. Steel, 27 Clinton Road, Leatherhead: UNTIL IT WEARS—WOES DOWN, NOSE DOWN!

OTHER AWARDS: £9: W. R. Turner, 14 Alexandra Terrace, Tredgar: HER GRACE—MY CUSSEDNESS—OUR "PRIDE," £8: D. J. Swift, 7 Oddy's Fold, Parkside Road, Meanwood, Leeds: THEY REACHED THE MOON AND—World's Survivors PLANTED FLAG! £7: L. H. Frankland, North Lodge, Stone Cross, Ulverston: DAD'S MOTOR-BIKE—LICENSED—FOR PUBLIC ENTERTAINMENT? £6: Mrs. E. E. Greenwood, 20 Wheats Avenue, Birmingham: KING FESTIVAL—NEEDING ERNINE, ENGLISH MAY! £5: W. GERRARD, 299 Elephant Lane, St. Helens, Lancs: A JUMP AHEAD—TEACHER—POSTED ALFIE'S REPORT! £4: C. H. Simms, 20 Crescent Road, Tilehurst, Reading: WORLD IN ARMS—"VOLCANO" THAT'S ABSORBING SULPHUR.

For ten winners of £4, see "Bullets" *Bulletin*.
50 Prizes of £1 and 2,000 "Good Shot" Prizes have also been posted.

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FIRST complete Square in INK, giving your Answers to Clues below. Then, if you wish to enter one extra Answer to any one, two or three Clues, give each such word in full in "Extra Answer" Form below Crossword Square.

Across Clues

1. Child who is constantly this during school lessons isn't likely to learn as much as others
5. Are not so much seen in garden during winter months
8. There seems to be no end to some of these
10. Many a farmer's looks the worse for the weather
12. Labour is concerned with the picking of these
13. Many a housewife now and again finds one very useful
14. People are apt to be a little doubtful about a man who is

Down Clues

1. A gambler may be quite a time before he loses this
2. Is often produced by dentist
3. If two men are close friends and one is a spendthrift, it's unlikely the other will be this
4. At certain time they appear quickly all over the place
6. Many an animal digs one in the ground
7. For M.P. to defy party whip might turn out to be such an act
9. There must be some spirit in
11. Violent gale will be likely to make you anxious if you're in this

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way. Just walk out of that door"—she pointed at the door to the living room—"and go through into the veranda, and run into the bush. Go to another district and get yourself an honest job and stop being a thief. I'll talk to the boss. I'll tell him to tell the police we made a mistake. Now then, Tembi. . . ." she concluded urgently, and went into the passage, where Willie was at the telephone, with his back to her.

He lifted his head, looked at her incredulously, and said: "Jane, you're crazy." Into the telephone he said: "Yes come quickly." He set down the receiver, turned to Jane and said, "You know he'll do it again, don't you?" He ran back to the bedroom.

But there had been no need to run. There stood Tembi, exactly where they had left him, his fists in his eyes like a small child.

"I told you to run away," said Jane angrily.

Willie sat on the bed and looked at Tembi with the look of one who has been outwitted. "Well, I'm damned," he said. "It's got me beat, this has."

Tembi continued to stand there, in the centre of the floor, hanging his head and crying. Jane was crying too. Willie was getting angrier, more and more irritable. Finally he left the room, slamming the door, and saying: "God damn it, everyone is mad."

Soon the police came, and there was no more doubt about what should be done. Tembi nodded at every question: he admitted everything. The handcuffs were put on him, and he was taken away in the police car.

At last Willie came back into the bedroom, where Jane lay crying on the bed. He patted her on the shoulder and said: "Now stop it. The thing is over. We can't do anything."

Jane sobbed out: "He's only alive because of me. That's what's so awful. And now he's going to prison."

"They don't think anything of prison. It isn't a disgrace as it is for us."

"But he's going to be one of those natives who spend all their lives in and out of prison."

"Well, what of it?" said Willie.

With the gentle, controlled exasperation of a husband, he lifted Jane and offered her his handkerchief. "Now stop it, old girl," he reasoned. "Do stop it. I'm tired. I want to go to bed. I've had hell up and down those damned pavements all day, and I've got a heavy day tomorrow with the tobacco." He began pulling off his boots.

Jane stopped crying, and also undressed. "There's something horrible about it all," she said restlessly. And finally, "What did he want, Willie? What is it he was wanting, all this time?"

THE END

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BELITA, THE RICH GIRL WHO MADE GOOD

Continued from page 17

he showed her the script, she turned it down—there was one page only. "I was a snooty upstart in those days," she says. Later, the producer returned with a script for a full feature rôle. This time she agreed; when *Silver Skates* appeared she was acclaimed as a serious rival to ice-queen Sonja Henie.

Although she has made a fortune on ice, she thinks that skating, by itself, is dull. "After you have seen one ice-show, you can't hope to see anything new the next time," she says. "The people who do ice-shows are lazy. They don't strive for novelty." Convinced that her real line was serious drama, she pestered her producers to give her rôles with more acting and less skating. The result was *Suspense*, a psychological thriller, with merely incidental skating, in which she had to leap through a hoop of knives. Her next film, *The Hunted*, had no skating at all.

Laughton Was Angry

In the summer of 1950, she achieved her ambition for straight parts by playing Varya in Chekhov's *Cherry Orchard* with Charles Laughton's company. "I'd given it a lot of thought," she says. "I studied intensively with Charles for six weeks before he even let me meet anyone else in his theatre group."

When she returned to Britain for *Babes in the Wood*, she had an arrangement with Laughton to rejoin his company this summer. "This will be my last skating show," she announced. However, a new ice-show, *London Melody*, was mooted, and Belita changed her mind. "It contains acting, skating and dancing. It's something new—and when a producer thinks up something new, you hold on to him. Charles was very, very angry when I told him."

New ideas have always had a strong attraction for Belita. When she first went into films, she suggested making an underwater ballet sequence with the swimmers in full ballet costume. The director said it was impossible. She was finally allowed to try only after her skirt had been wired to keep it in shape. She was doubtful, but dived in. Immediately the stiffened skirt filled with water and, unable to reach the surface, she had to be fished out with a pole. When the wiring was taken out, she was able to do the ballet successfully.

Stage Shot That Hurt

Occasionally, Belita has appeared in a show with her husband, Joel McGinnis. On one occasion, they were playing in revue in Havana. At the end of their act, she had to scream and fall after being shot by her husband. One night she screamed so convincingly that they got four curtains. "That's enough," said McGinnis as she lay on the stage. "Get up and take a bow." The curtain came down for the last time. Still she did not move. Finally, he reached over and dragged her off by one foot. She was covered with blood.

The stage manager, striving after realism, had stuffed the chambers of the pistol with bread, accidentally leaving in a few pieces of grit. The blast had knocked her out and the grit had caused a dozen superficial wounds. After they had been dressed, she was able to appear in the final scene. Next morning a Hollywood newspaper ran a headline: "Joel McGinnis shoots wife." THE END

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